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Swedish Social Welfare and its Application to American Welfare Systems

Ben Wilson Galloway
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

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Swedish Social Welfare and its Application to American Welfare Systems

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for a degree of
Master of Arts in Geography

by

Ben Galloway
University of Arkansas
Bachelor of Arts in Geography, 2014

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University of Arkansas

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Fiona Davidson, Ph. D.
Thesis Director

Thomas Paradise, Ph. D.
Committee Member

Jason Tullis, Ph. D.
Committee Member

Abstract

Swedish Social Welfare and its Application to American Welfare Systems concerns itself with the issue of determining the origins of the modern Swedish social welfare system. Additionally, the causes behind the formation of the system are evaluated for their relevancy concerning the formation of the American welfare system. Multiple areas of study are considered, including racial impacts, economic factors, sociological impactors, and demographic variables.

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Introduction

In America, the average inpatient day, regardless whether the hospital is for-profit or non-profit, commonly costs an average of more than 2,000 dollars per day. Arkansas, despite being one of the cheaper states in which to go to the hospital, averages a cost of more than 1,500 dollars per inpatient day. (Rappleye 2015) Average hospital stays in America cost 10,400 dollars and run around 4-5 days total. (Elixhauser and Weiss, 2012) These visits alone, consisting of only a part of the private citizen health care spending in the country, not only affect a large portion of the population but also constitute a significant impact on the economy of the United States. In 2012 alone, 36.5 million people were hospitalized, or 116 per 1,000 population. This resulted in an economic cost of more than 370 billion dollars.

The International Federation of Health Plans, in a 2012 report, found that the price of an average day in an average American hospital was as costly as a similar daylong stay in a hospital in the countries of Argentina, Spain, South Africa, the Netherlands, France, Chile, New Zealand, and Australia combined. At the same time, the same report noted that out of all these countries, in 2010, the United States, despite its emphasis on the presumed efficiencies of privatized health insurance, spent 17% of its GDP on health spending-the OECD average is 9.5% for the same year, and the closest any of the above countries comes to America's figure is France; far, far back at 11.6%. (International Federation of Health Plans 2012)

The World Bank estimates American total health expenditure, which is "the sum of public and private health expenditure... it covers the provision of health services (preventive and curative), family planning activities, nutrition activities, and emergency aid designated for health" at 17.1% from the period from 2010-2015. (World Bank 2016) At the same time, in the notorious WHO ranking from 2000 concerning the quality of various countries healthcare

systems, America came in 37th, despite being first in expenditure per capita. (Blackstone and Taylor, 2012) One cannot help but take these facts, and others, into consideration, see the underperformance and the overspending, and wonder if there is not some way to make improvements on the American medical welfare system.

Among scholars seeking to analyze the effects of the American welfare system, comparison is often easily made to the “welfare states” common among developed in places like Europe. This can have a range of meanings; people might refer to Canada’s nearly free public health care, or the high taxes-high benefits states common in the Nordic countries and to a certain degree across the European mainland. A welfare state is defined by Merriam Webster as “a social system in which a government is responsible for the economic and social welfare of its citizens and has policies to provide free health care, support for the unemployed, etc.; also : a country that has such a system”. (Merriam-Webster 2016) This can obviously apply to varying degrees; America has enacted numerous policies with the intent to provide for the economic and physical well-being of its citizenry, as have many other developed countries. At the same time, however, the degree of implementation and the focus placed on these policies can vary from place to place. As such, it is essential in the examination of an alternative to the modern American welfare system that a social welfare state be found that can be considered a strong example of a different approach than that taken by the United States.

In searching for a strong contrast to the capitalist focused American welfare system, the Nordic countries are the first to come to mind for many academics. Commonly the first countries thought of when the phrase “social welfare state” is put forth, the Nordics are famous for their pioneering modernization combined with efficient social welfare policies. To quote the Economist in 2013, “If you had to be reborn anywhere in the world as a person with average

talents and income, you would want to be a Viking.” (Economist 2013) The question then becomes which specific country is the best selection as a counterpart. Sweden is the immediate logical conclusion-the largest population, landmass, economy, and a long social and political history. In short, it provides the largest population and sample size for comparison to the gigantic statistical enterprise that is the analysis of the United States. The increase in sample size also serves to ameliorate potential error in both quantitative statistical records and data gathering, and in qualitative evaluation, both independent and based on these aforementioned statistics.

Having arrived at a study site to research, the question now presents itself: How did Sweden arrive at its modern iteration of a welfare state? During what period did the social welfare state come into its modern form? And, primarily, what factors contributed significantly to the formation of the social welfare state, and, concerning the comparison with the United States, are these same formative factors identifiable in the history of that country? In short, what are the factors necessary for the formation of a Swedish-style welfare state, and have the same factors co-occurred in a similar fashion in the United States?

That America is at a crossroads of social welfare policy is clear. Popular support for the Obama presidency despite his avowed intent to implement the PPACA (Obamacare) demonstrated a significant popular support for increased social welfare policy in the European vein. (Pew Research Center 2015) At the same time, inequality and vested interests interfering in government activities are experiencing a significant increase; and these are problems specifically opposed by Scandinavian states and Sweden in particular, and problems important to a significant portion of American citizenry as well, as evidenced by the popular success of candidates performing well in elections occupying roles of “government outsiders”. (Silver 2016)

That the area of study responsible for undertaking this analysis be geography is of essential import to the overall function of the analysis. Social welfare, in a sense, manifests as a reflection of scale. Specifically, Sweden, a smaller, more homogenous society, which is also geographically less significant than the larger and more diverse United States, possesses fewer racial and cultural boundaries to obstruct the implementation of more egalitarian social programs.

At the same time, the issue of health care is very much an issue spanning multiple spheres of analysis. Geography, as the discipline perhaps most suited to analysis across spheres as varying as economic history and societal racism, is uniquely suited as the optimal lens through which to evaluate the matter of the origin and evolution of Swedish social welfare, and by extension, its American counterpart. The flexibility to evaluate and assess how different study areas interact and effect each other within the overall sphere of social welfare is of paramount importance.

The status of America as a world leader is very, very much in question concerning its performance in the simple health care and benefits afforded to its citizens. Geographic study of the formational variables behind the rise of the modern-day Swedish welfare state system can be essential not only in determining the formational variables of an academically valuable study site, but in providing a crucial research aid in the study of and application of solutions to America's modern day welfare issues-solutions that are sorely needed as the health insurance crisis in America continues to cause further distress to the economy and the population.

Literature Review

At its heart, geography is a multidisciplinary science. Sub-focuses of the field of geography range from innovative geospatial analysis techniques to the studious analysis of resource exploitation, the study of political systems, the settling of cities, and a hundred other applications. It is thus that I posit the appropriateness of geography in being the correct, and only, discipline with which to utilize the almost multidisciplinary approach necessary to analyze the formation of Swedish welfare.

When one asks the question “what are the factors necessary for the formation of a Swedish-style welfare state, and have the same factors co-occurred in a similar fashion in the United States” one cannot say, for example, that “This answer is economic in nature”, or “This answer can be answered solely by an analysis of Swedish demographics”. To do so is to ignore the wealth of alternative formative influences on such a collection of institutions that would irretrievably diminish the legitimacy of the research.

At the same time, such a narrow focus on a single area of study lends credence to the idea that such singular interest on a single topic area in regard to such a broad a subject as the formation of Swedish social welfare, with so many influencing factors, leaves wide open the possibility that factors deemed significant by their role within the single topic area may result in the attribution of significance to historical progressions and events that may be insignificant when one steps back to understand the multidisciplinary inputs required to truly understand the formative influences of the welfare state. For example, the Swedish timber industry in the 19th century was a major part of the Swedish economy. In 1850, timber accounted for 15% of Swedish exports-a mere two decades later, it accounted for more than half of the Swedish export

market, and the export value had increased by three times over. (Östlund 1995) At first glance, when examined among the spectrum of the economic history of Sweden, this may seem a crucial economic step in the evolution of Sweden as a country; but stepping back, the question as to its significance in the formation of the Swedish welfare state arises. If lumped under the common banner of Swedish industrialization-itself wildly important in its impact on modern day Sweden-much as with every industrialized country-19th century timber statistics lose a certain measure of their perceived importance when viewed through a narrow economic-only lens.

The point is not that economics is an unimportant subject matter, or that individual subject areas are insignificant in comparison to some greater gestalt approach. Rather, the argument is that *all* of the individual spheres of influence on the formation of the Swedish welfare state are anything but insignificant. However, they must be analyzed in such a way as to keep the multifactorial nature of the formative processes of the welfare state in mind, lest the quantitative statistics and the qualitative conclusions stray into the realm of insignificance or risk error based on insignificant data points. (Huber, Ragin, and Stephens, 1993) To explain the direction of the analysis in a spatial sense, it is important to take into account the nature of Sweden as an entire spatial entity as being critical in the formation of its modern-day welfare state form. In this vein of significance and a multidisciplinary approach, the methods of approach concerning the analysis of the Swedish welfare state formation have been deemed critical by a variety of academics. The question arises; which areas should be focused on? In a review of the work of noted social welfare state researcher Harold Wilensky by Martin Danzig, Danzig notes the crucial nature of Wilensky's multidirectional approach to the issues underlying the formation of the social welfare states that he studies. He argues the interrelated significance of economic, political, and social/demographic factors. (Danzig 1977) Multiple other scholars,

such as Daniel Bell and Arthur Vidich utilize a similar multidisciplinary approach also using the same methodology. It is thus proposed that it is only logical to assume the heightened efficacy of a multidisciplinary examination of the formative factors behind 20th century Swedish welfare policy implementation.

The Formational Period of the Swedish Welfare System

In analyzing the formational factors of the Swedish welfare state, an understanding of the relevant time period is paramount. The temporal scale of the research cannot be ignored if the correct time period, and thus the correct factors, are to be taken into consideration. Different spheres of influence may have different respective time periods, but an overall, comprehensive, multifaceted analysis must present an inclusive timeframe with which to analyze the formation of Swedish social welfare. Schall identifies the social aspects of the formation of the welfare state as extending back to the mid-1920s, and lasting until the mid-1970s and the first significant wave of immigration to Sweden and the subsequently increasing heterogeneity of the population. (Schall 2016) Hancock, in 1976, argued a generalized formational time period starting at the beginning of the 19th century, in line with increasing industrialization and the rise of the Social Democrat party. (Hancock 1977) Schiff argues the significant time period of welfare policy formation began with the rise of the Social Democratic party to power in 1932. (Schiff 1974) In *The Small Giant*, Carl Gustavson places the weight of importance strongly on the preindustrial period before World War One, and additionally on the formative period between World War One and the start of the 1980s. (Gustavson 1986) Heclo and Madsen, in *Policy and Politics in Sweden*, assign the welfare state a formative period lasting the duration of what they deem noteworthy policy implementation, from 1909-1978. (Heclo and Madsen, 1987)) As summarized by Eric Einhorn, noted researcher of the Swedish welfare state Sven Olsson posits

the end of the Swedish welfare state formational period as the start of the 1970s. (Einhorn 1992) Regardless of the formative periods espoused by these varying academics, the same theme is seen throughout; that of the alleged formative period varying depending on which singular element they espouse as the most critical to welfare state formation; be it politics, social pressure, homogeneity of the population, or an increase in economic activity.

Prior Research on the Swedish Welfare State

Carly Elizabeth Schall notes the importance of the political aspects of the foundation of the social welfare state, along with the interrelated importance of the demographic situation in Sweden. Schall argues that not only was the welfare state founded on a populist political motivation, but also that the aforementioned political drive was concocted in large part through an emphasis of the homogeneity of the population. She also argues that not only is the Swedish welfare state unique in that it was designed specifically for the Swedish population, by the Swedish population, but also that the nation of Sweden and the culture of Sweden have come to be defined to some degree by their chosen form of welfare policy implementation; a concept she labels as the welfare “stateification of Swedishness”. (Schall 2016) Valocchi argues that unique Swedish circumstances leading to reduced inequality and heightened sensitivity to agrarian work sector demands led to a broader implementation of welfare state policy, or at least engendered the idea of such activity, until it was driven into being by the Social Democrats. (Valocchi 1992) Sven Olsson, as reviewed by Eric Einhorn, argues, among other things, that industrialization paved the way for solidarity among the industrializing Sweden population. Olsson also rejects Harvard historian Peter Baldwin’s assertion that Swedish conservatives were responsible for the main driving thrust of Swedish welfare state policy implementation in the post-World War Two era. (Einhorn 1992) In this he indirectly reaffirms the repeated theme of Social Democratic

importance in the political sphere of the formation of the Swedish welfare state. In a study produced by the Harvard Institute of Economic Research, the researchers argue that homogeneity drives the social welfare impetus at the political level in European-style welfare states, ostensibly including the homogenous Sweden. (Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote 2001) In total, however, very few of these studies, however, devote anything but lip service to other spheres of influence on the formation of the welfare state system as being anything but secondary to the overall importance of political and their associated demographic factors, or vice versa, and none of them focus on anything more than their primary position of focus.

Economically, a wealth of studies exists in regard to the Swedish social welfare system as to beggar the imagination, much of it produced by the formidable Swedish academic machine itself. In regard to the formation of formation of the Swedish welfare state and its economic drivers, numerous different studies have arisen. In *An Economic History of Sweden*, Lars Magnusson cites, among a comprehensive discussion of a vast multitude of factors concerning Swedish economic evolution, the industrialization of Sweden as being crucial to the implementation of the social policies that would drive the rise of the modern-day welfare state. (Magnusson 2000, 177) Milner writes in *Sweden: Social Democracy in Practice* that the rise of the Swedish welfare state started with the economic advantages afforded by state moderation of economic policy. (Milner 1989 22-33) Sandberg and Steckel argue the industrialization in Sweden led directly to a higher quality of life through the instrument of social welfare reform. (Sandberg and Steckel 132) Borg and Vedin argue that Swedish technological advances co-occurring with and driving the Industrial Revolution helped Sweden to achieve the enviable economic conditions it enjoyed during the post-World War Two era, when combined with their lack of involvement in either World War. The lack of infrastructure destruction in either World

War deserves mention as a driver of the following uptick in economic fortune in Sweden. Borg and Vedin are among a few of the many who espouse the importance of this fortune in driving future economic development and prosperity. (Borg and Vedin 1982)

That the formational aspects of Swedish welfare are as described is unsurprising- economics, social factors, politics and demographics are core principles driving state formation in the modern era, and have done the same back through history for thousands of years. At the same time, that none of these variables are analyzed en masse as a greater combined formative influence is surprising. In this narrow focus can be seen a paucity in previous research, a weakness needing to be addressed by a more comprehensive analysis taking into account the potential for multiple significant influences on policy implementation. That such a narrow focus has been taken by so many leading researchers of the Swedish social welfare state is surprising, and perhaps a result of the lack of geographically centered analysis, which can trend towards more the lacking multidisciplinary analysis perhaps more appropriate to the specified research question at hand.

Prior Analysis on the American Welfare State

That the American welfare state lags behind in its degree of implementation in comparison to many European countries and other OECD nations is unsurprising. The American welfare state has been described as “reluctant” by Harold Wilensky, “a semi-welfare state” by Bruce Jansson, a “welfare state laggard” by Michael Katz, “a residual welfare state” by Robert Kudrle and Theodore Marmor, and an “incomplete welfare state” by Diane Sainsbury. (Howard 2003) (LeBeaux and Wilensky, 1965) (Jansson 2001) (Katz 1986) (Kudrle and Marmor, 1981) (Sainsbury 1996)

At the same time, direct comparisons between the foundational factors of the Swedish welfare system and the American welfare system are remarkable only in their complete absence. Yves Bourdet noted sourly the academic disinterest for research into the viability of other economic approaches as a result of a proposed American-centered domination of economic analysis in the 20th century. Even Bourdet's collection of studies comparing the Swedish model with other countries only extended to an analysis of Sweden in relation to other European countries that ostensibly display a much greater proximity to the generalized Swedish social welfare ideal than would the United States. (Bourdet 1992, 2) Studies have been produced that have attempted to analyze the formative factors behind American social welfare policy, such as the Harvard Institute of Economics study titled "Why Doesn't the US have a European-style Welfare State", but direct comparison to Sweden and a true multidisciplinary analysis have been lacking. (Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote 2001)

In summary, it is thus posited that two key gaps exist in the modern research collection concerning the study of Swedish social welfare and the factors significant in its formation, and their subsequent potential mirrored applications to the United States. Firstly, the comprehensive analysis of the significant formational drivers of Swedish social welfare, while heavily analyzed by the academic community, is lacking in multidisciplinary analyses, and even more so in analyses that take into account more than one potential variable, and even then, variables are often intertwined as to consist of a single thought process, for example, sociopolitical. Additionally, direct comparison of the multidisciplinary factors behind (specifically) Swedish social welfare policy formation with their potential mirror occurrences or lack thereof in the United States is a research topic particularly lacking. Therefore, it is contended that a gap in the modern research for the question of "what are the factors necessary for the formation of a

Swedish-style welfare state, and have the same factors co-occurred in a similar fashion in the United States” not only exists but is necessary for a more comprehensive analysis of the subject matter at hand.

Study Site

In examining the factors leading to the formation of what is now the modern-day Swedish welfare state system and the potential parallels with the past, present, or future United States of America, one must first carefully define exactly what is meant by “welfare state”. Encyclopedia Britannica describes a welfare state as being a “concept of government in which the state or a well-established network of social institutions plays a key role in the protection and promotion of the economic and social well-being of citizens. It is based on the principles of equality of opportunity, equitable distribution of wealth, and public responsibility for those unable to avail themselves of the minimal provisions for a good life.” (Encyclopedia Britannica 2015) This definition, while helpful, is rather general. In particular, we are interested in the specific factors leading to the formation of the Swedish welfare state, and as such, determining a more precise idea of the modern-day Swedish end product is imperative. In addition, the very nature of a welfare state is inherently one relative to the nature of the degree to which the aforementioned “social institutions” (examples including the United States’ Social Security or the United Kingdom’s National Health Service) protect and engender the economic and social well-being of citizens.

As previously stated, I will attempt to determine the key foundational roots of this welfare system and the degree to which it is employed in the sovereign nation of Sweden is based on three significant factors; political factors(including such topics as ruling party/coalition continuity), economics, and demographics. At the same time, if an examination is to be made into the nature of these conditions for welfare state formation in regard to the viability of such a window for change in the climate of the past, present, or future United States, these significant

factors, when described in the Swedish setting, must then be presented alongside their American counterparts.

Sweden Political Factors

Viking Era

Large-scale Viking activity is thought to have predated the sixth century C.E. and lasted more than 600 years into the 12-13th centuries, before internal and external pressures brought an end to and a transition out of pan-Nordic Viking culture. Externally, Vikings were focused on acquisition through trading or warfare. The method would depend in large part on the particular Vikings, be they Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, etc., and the specific groups with which they came into contact, be they from Western Europe, the Mediterranean region, or even the Middle East. Swedish Vikings in particular were noted for their trade with the Arabs, which served to facilitate acquisition of silver, among other resources. (National Museum of Denmark 2016)

These Viking excursions, be they peaceful or warlike, would help to set the boundaries of Viking society. In what would prove to be a remarkably egalitarian distribution of responsibility in regard to military responsibilities, regions in Viking areas were split up into areas called “hundreds”, with each area obligated to provide a certain number of ships and men to crew them, a figure crucially determined by the affluence and population of the hundred in question. Another cooperative, socialistic institution of the Viking Age was the development by the Swedish Vikings of a beacon system along the east coast of Scandinavia, with the intended purpose of facilitating overall sea travel. (Jones 2001, 121) These early proto-redistributive programs would be precursors to the modern Swedish welfare system.

The Riksdag

It was also during this period that the nascent Swedish parliament, the Riksdag, was slowly growing into its modern-day self. In 1809, after a long period of marginalization of the Riksdag and promotion of the powers of the monarch, a new constitution was established firmly denoting the division of powers between the king and the parliament. A separation of different branches of government-judicial, legislative, and executive, was established, along with the granted independence of courts and public authorities. (Government of Sweden 2016b) In 1865, the Riksdag became a bicameral body, consisting of an upper house of mostly wealthy elites and nobility, while the lower house was open to more middle-class representatives. (Government of Sweden 2016b) By this time, suffragist movements were gaining traction in Swedish society, and by 1862, women in several differing economic groups were allowed to vote. By the early 1900s, these same women were allowed to hold office, and by 1918, universal suffrage in local elections was established. (Government of Sweden 2016b) In the revolutionary period following World War One, near-universal suffrage was achieved (excepting groups such as prisoners, the bankrupted, and those dependent on a certain threshold of government aid) and five women were elected to the Riksdag in 1921. (Government of Sweden 2016b) This system would persist more or less unchanged until the two houses of the Riksdag united in 1971, and the new, modern day constitution was written in 1974. The primary change to the Riksdag after this new constitution was established was the Speaker having a key role in the formation of coalition governments, and the unicameral nature of the legislative branch.

Examination of the Riksdag leads to the discovery of a driving force of Swedish social welfare reform. That force is the Social Democrat political party, which has dominated Swedish politics since its first majority in parliament in 1932. Since that election, the Social Democrats

have led the government for all but 16 years- a startling figure for someone more accustomed to American political volatility. The Swedish political system has historically possessed a wider range of parties than would be expected by an average American- 5-8 parties have historically been represented in the legislature throughout the modern history of the Riksdag. (Government of Sweden 2016b) The Social Democrats, following a united coalition government during the trials of World War 2, led a relatively unaffected and unharmed Sweden into the changed post-war climate with a remarkable amount of pragmatism and an unshakeable devotion to the establishment of what is today known as the Swedish model of welfare state formation. While the foundation of the Swedish welfare state was laid with Depression-era policies such as the establishment of the old-age pension system in 1937, the vast majority of welfare policies were enacted in the time of relative economic prosperity following World War 2. (European Commission 2013) (Heclo and Madsen 1987, 49)) The Social Democrats have continued to lead Sweden through a series of coalition governments almost continuously through the economic crises of the 1970s and the globalization rush of the 1990s, and still lead the Swedish nation today following the 2014 election.

United States Political Factors

The youth of America as a country, along with the assortment of cultures and political backgrounds inherent to its immigrant populations' countries of origin, makes the analysis of the political factors inherent in its policymaking a decidedly more modern affair than the more long-lasting political entity that is Sweden. Perhaps the most noteworthy aspect of American politics is the historical absence of a large number of parties in presidential and congressional elections. By far the most telling indicator of this is the lack of successful third party candidates in American presidential elections throughout the history of the United States. The modern era has been dominated by the Republican and Democratic parties; with the earlier decades of American political history seeing the competition of parties such as the Federalists, the Whigs, and the Democrat-Republicans. (World Atlas 2016) Perhaps the only noteworthy third-party effort in American political history is Teddy Roosevelt's attempt to run as the candidate of his own party upon failing to receive the Republican nomination. Regardless, Roosevelt was defeated, and his campaign's notoriety lies more or less solely in promoting the least *unsuccessful* third party candidate in American political history.

This state of affairs, of course, lies in sharp contrast to the aforementioned party diversity of Swedish politics; along with dozens of minor parties and local parties, Sweden has eight major parties represented in parliament; the Social Democratic, Conservative, Ecologist, Liberal, Agrarian, Nationalist, Christian Democratic, and Communist parties, and a current ruling coalition of Social Democrats and the Green Party, as of the latest Riksdag election in 2014; an election which saw the end of the previous ruling coalition of center-right parties. (European Election Database 2015) The lack of party diversity in American directly leads to a lack of involvement in the voter turnout; according to the Pew Research Center, only 53.6% of the

population of voting age adults turned out for the 2012 presidential election, 31st out of 34 OECD countries, whereas Sweden came in third with 82.6% participation. (DeSilver 2015) At the same time, relatively convoluted American voter registration practices, in some cases a legacy from racism leftover from slavery issues more than a century past the Civil War, lead to low voter registration, and subsequently additionally infringe on voter turnout. (Powell 1986) American registered voters consist of a relatively poor 71% of the voting age citizenry, compared to 96% for Sweden. (DeSilver 2015)

A key difference in post-World War Two American and Swedish political scenes concerns the perceived influence of communism in the political agenda. Whereas in the United States, communism was seen as the archenemy, emblematic of the rival superpower, the USSR, in Sweden, it was viewed through a more pragmatic lens-following the war, high-ranking and influential Social Democrat Gunner Myrdal postulated that major post-war depression was imminent, and that the only alternative to high post-war unemployment was through extensive government regulation and some form of command economy. (Magnusson 2000, 221)

Fortunately for the Swedes, this recession never materialized and the economy instead took off, but the lack of opposition to these claims by the leading party at the time serves to admirably illuminate the lack of opposition to certain aspects of communism permeating the government of Sweden. In America, however, communists were labeled as spies and traitors to the great good of capitalism, both overtly through public spectacles such as McCarthyism, etc., and subconsciously with the use of propaganda and other methods. (Belmonte 2013) (Bernhard 2003) At the same time, the near constant American involvement in proxy wars, along with direct involvement in Vietnam and Korea, in opposition to communist regimes, painted communism and concepts related to it as the enemy for generations of American citizens and

present and future/modern day policymakers. This would trickle over into a general distaste for policies deemed “socialist” by the general public, as seen even into the current presidential election with the controversy surrounding the avowed “socialist” candidate, Bernie Sanders.

Summarily, while United States’ government structure in a general sense is very similar to that of Sweden-judicial, legislative, executive-along with relatively well-educated voter bases and a long history of democracy, Sweden and the United States differ politically on a wide range of issues, be they the number of political parties, the sociological and political aversion to communism and its associations, or lack thereof, voter turnout, and ease of registration. These differences help form the backbone delineating the differences between American social welfare policy and the Swedish welfare state and its associated policies.

Swedish Economics

Research into the economic variables surrounding the evolution of social welfare systems in Scandinavia has been ongoing for decades. An argument can be made for each of what are conventionally considered the Scandinavian countries (Iceland, Norway, Finland, Sweden, and Denmark) to be selected as an ideal study site for the analysis of the economic factors influencing social welfare policy. Norway, with its remarkably high GDP PPP, provides a look at a government emphasizing Scandinavian-style social welfare with perhaps the largest amount of economic freedom combined with inclination to implement Scandinavian social welfare-style policies in the world. No significant population size with what could be regarded as a classical Scandinavian style system of social policies can come close to matching the Norwegian GDP PPP per capita, which leaves Norway in an enviable position to act on its broad tax base in whatever policy-making fashion it might so choose to entertain. This would, of course, allow for

the analysis of the full capacities of such policymaking ideals in an environment as unfettered as possible by the restraints of economic cost.

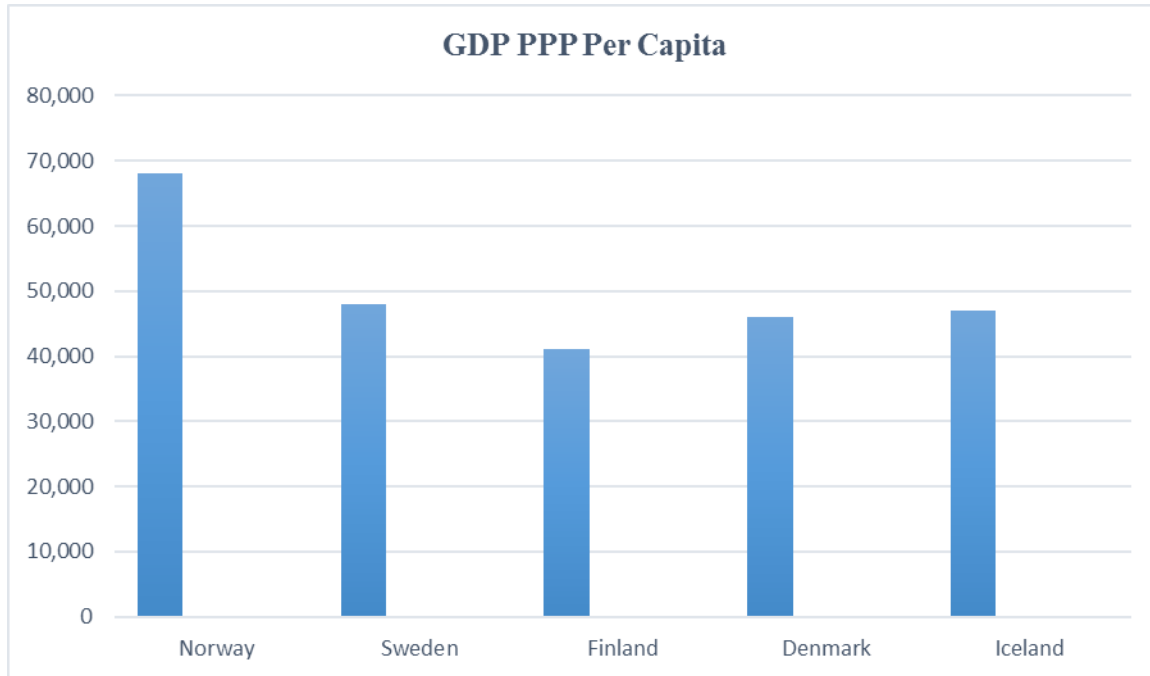


Figure 1: GDP PPP in the Scandinavian countries (CIA World Factbook 2016)

Finland, on the other hand, offers the relatively harsher path down analysis of social welfare policy. With negative GDP growth from 2013-2015, and the lowest GDP PPP, GDP, and GDP PPP per capita among the Scandinavian five, Finland offers a prime opportunity to research what policies these populations and their representatives deem most essential in a time of relative economic downturn, and in what is arguably, in terms of government income concerning available capital spending on a per capita population basis, the most trying economy in Scandinavia. Admittedly, despite the negative GDP growth rate from 2013-2015, most economies, and most populations, would love to be in the position Finland finds itself in terms of quality of life and other metrics. Regardless, however, if one must look for the most suboptimal

economic conditions for policymaking among the Scandinavian options, the Finnish are the obvious choice.

It is, of course, my contention that Sweden, despite the aforementioned arguments, best serves as the study site through which Scandinavian social welfare policies can be best analyzed, along with their potential implantation, or missed implementation, in the United States. Sweden is, first and foremost, the largest population among the Scandinavian countries by a significant margin, and covers the largest area of land in the region, coming in at just under the size of California, making it one of the larger European states. Economically, the Swedes also have far and away outstripped their neighbors in terms of sheer economic scale, with a higher GDP, GDP PPP, and labor force. The

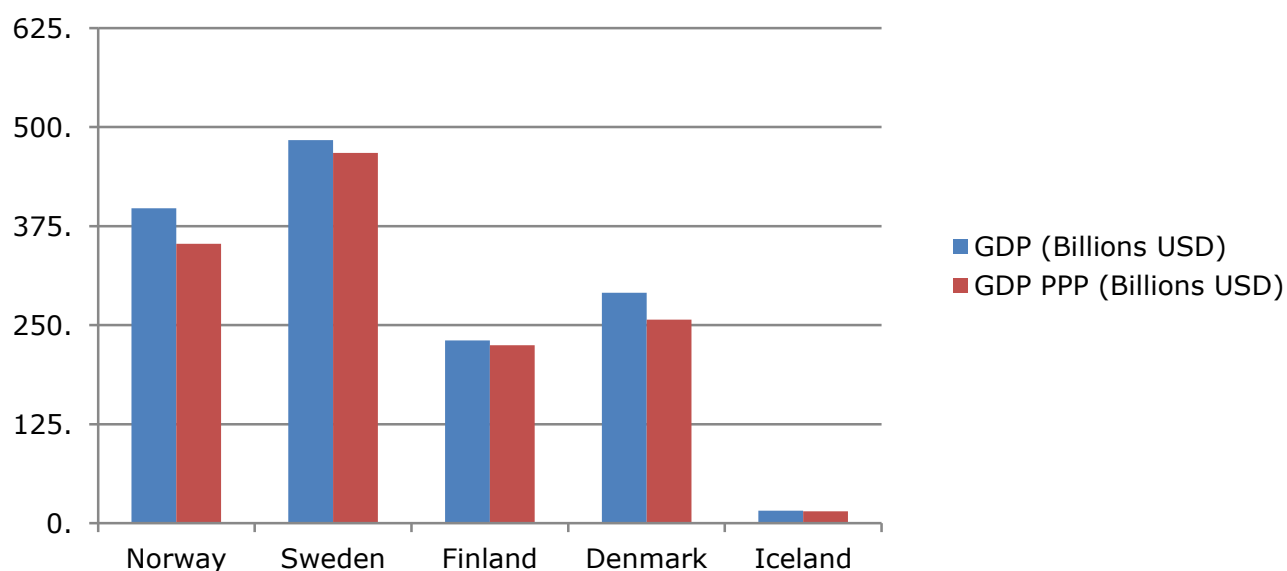


Figure 2: GDP and GDP PPP comparison in the Scandinavian countries (World Bank 2017)

aforementioned all-important intertwining of economic ability with the ability to enact meaningful social welfare policy in the modern era is a crucial aspect of the Scandinavian study site that obviously cannot be ignored. Additionally, the simplistically beneficial capacities of

what is simply a larger sample size cannot be understated, given the end goal necessary to analyzing the overall question is the comparison of the Swedish study site with an industrializing and also a modern day United States of America; a much larger entity, on a much greater scale.

Regardless, as both are highly modern, “westernized”, industrialized countries, the United States and Sweden have many things in common, both demographically and economically; however, through what in large part is a significant policy and social diversion between the two however, many per capita statistics; which we must use given the vast disparity in lump sum statistics between these two very differently sized and populated countries, also show significant departures between American and Swedish statistical patterns.

First, economically, the United States economy dwarfs the substantial but relatively insignificant Swedish economy. Per capita statistical analyses, as previously mentioned, do, however, offer a more efficacious approach to determining the parallels between the two. GDP PPP per capita numbers for both countries are relatively high, with the United States coming in to what would amount for second place among the Scandinavian countries. GDP growth rate for both economies from 2013-2015 is also remarkably similar. However, there are also dramatic statistical gaps between a large number of Swedish and American economic variables, gaps that will serve as useful baselines for which to analyze the overarching query. That these statistical gaps are at least in part related to Scandinavian tax policy, social welfare systems, etc. is undeniable, but the effects of these gaps on economic dynamism, etc. is somewhat open to debate. Regardless, when one compares Sweden to the United States in a variety of measures regarding egalitarian economic policy, the United States and Sweden fall

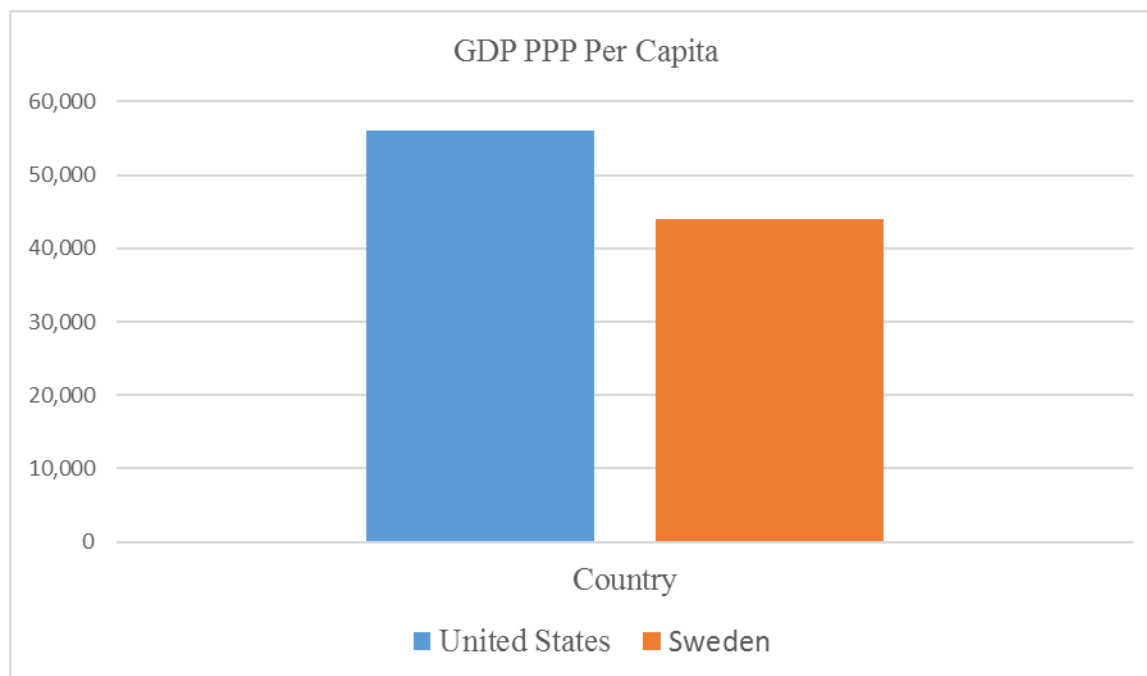


Figure 3: GDP PPP Per Capita comparison between the United States and Sweden (CIA World Factbook 2016a) (World Bank 2017)

very, very far apart on many metrics of economic equality. The Swedish Gini coefficient, despite rising significantly in the two decades since the Scandinavian banking crises of the 1990s, still clocks in much lower than the OECD average, and vastly lower than the American Gini; which, despite varying from source to source, be it the OECD report on Gini coefficients for 2015, Forbes 2015 data, or the Allianz report on global wealth disparity, is between the highest and the fourth highest in the world among what are rather universally considered developed countries. (The Economist, 2012) (OECD 2016a) (Sherman 2015) (Allianz 2015) Additionally, in 2015 Allianz calculated for the first time global wealth inequality, which differs from the Gini measurement of income inequality, but takes into account many of the same variables, and found that the United States again tops the list.

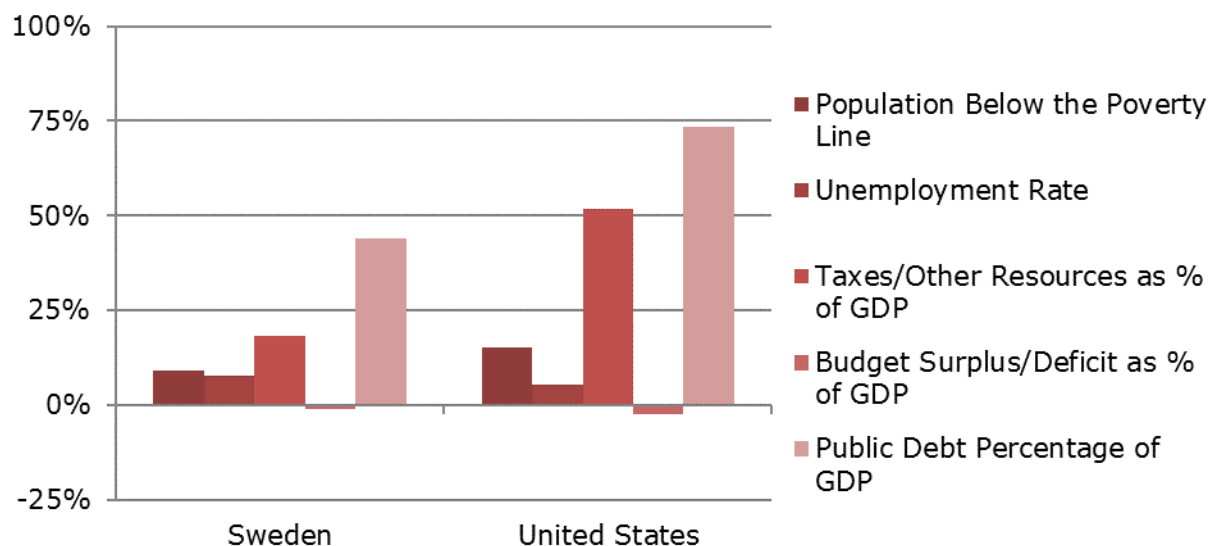


Figure 4: Comparison between Swedish and American government economic indicators (Allianz 2015)

Other measures also demonstrate the increased inequality evident in American economics vs. Swedish economics, where government benefits are of course more commonplace, such as the unemployment rate, the percent of taxes and other similar incomes as % of the national GDP, the budget surplus/deficit, and the percentage of public debt as a percentage of the GDP.

Modern day economic comparisons, while efficacious in many regards, are equaled in their necessity by the importance of historical economic analysis. Firstly, a glimpse into the economic history of Sweden can offer crucial insight concerning the conditions surrounding and driving the impetus behind the formation of the economic foundation of the modern Swedish social system. In sharp contrast to its status as a relatively affluent nation, Sweden has not always been a beacon of economic prosperity. In 1799 the noteworthy English economist Thomas Malthus visited Scandinavia to gather information for the follow up work to his *Essay on the Principles of Population*, and was stunned by the breadth of the poverty he witnessed, noting a population barely surviving on “bark bread” and sorrel grass, and resembling so many “Quakers in morning”, so downtrodden was their attitude. (Magnusson 2000, 1)

Up to the beginning of the 18th century, and the beginning of the onset of the Agricultural Revolution, Sweden was stuck in what was, for the majority of the primarily agrarian-based populations of northern Europe, a sort of economic/agrarian holding pattern, in which the majority of the harvest went towards individual consumption for the sake of simple survival and the rest was eaten up by an arrangement of taxes and other such fees. Bracketed by the pre-agricultural boom of the very early 1700s and the noteworthy “final” famine of the 1860s, Sweden experienced an extended and comprehensive period of agricultural productivity increase. (Dribe 2003) Varying statistical contributions from a variety of Swedish scientists firmly illustrate the general increases in production during this time. Eli Hekscher estimated that grain production increased by 75% from 1720-1815. Gustaf Utterstrom estimated total growth in the production of grain and potatoes of between 60-100% during the period between 1815-1860. Lennart Schon estimated annual vegetable production growth of around half a percent a year from 1815-1850. (Magnusson 2003, 3) Regardless of the individual figures, however, the clear trend of increased agricultural yield and productivity is readily apparent. As is the case with agricultural revolutions across history, increased agricultural production frees up members of the population to move out of the agricultural sector and into other areas of work, driving innovation, and in this case, Swedish industrialization, which began in earnest in the latter half of the 19th century, and continued onwards from there, reaching its peak as Sweden emerged relatively unscathed from World War Two onto the greater economic world stage. (Government of Sweden 2016c)

As with many countries during the early periods of industrialization, the increased agricultural yield led to economic upturns in other areas. Sweden is fortunate to contain natural resources crucial to industrializing societies; namely, iron and timber. (United States Congress

1963) At the same time as these domestic resources fed the industrialization of Sweden, they also fed the industrialization of other countries in Northern Europe, primarily with the United Kingdom, and this transit of raw materials would see innovation return to Sweden in the form of applicable new technologies. (Bosworth and Maiolo, 2015)

This growth, however, even as it continued through World War One and onwards into the 1920s, was somewhat stifled given the Great Depression and the subsequent, at best awkward, state of economic affairs perpetrated by German intervention in the Scandinavian Peninsula during World War Two, an intervention coincidentally driven by the requirement by the Nazi war machine for Swedish iron ore. (Bosworth and Maiolo 2015) As with most of the western world, any economic takeoff would have to wait until the completion of World War 2. Sweden was particularly slow to emerge right out of the gate in the post-war period-fears of a post-war recession kept wartime regulations and restrictions in place in many cases until the late 1950s. (Magnusson 2000, 204) However, following dramatic capital investment in the 1950s and the startling postwar technology growth both in Sweden and worldwide, the Swedes experienced unprecedented economic prosperity. (Magnusson 2000, 203-204) The Social Democrats, who were in control of Swedish politics for the duration of this period, would leverage their success into finalizing the establishment of their long-desired welfare strategies and social policies. This movement was aided by the natural economic narrowing of the income gap due to the sheer prosperity being experienced at the time. While this phenomenon was notable even in the 1930s, it was truly realized in the prosperity of the post-war period. (Magnusson 2000, 201) In the end, this combination of economic factors-prosperity, stability, the natural narrowing of the wage gap, and to a lesser extent the universal undertaking of rationing and material limitation, would be important contributors to the establishment of the modern Swedish welfare state.

American Economics

When examining American economic history in relation to periods in which the establishment of a welfare state similar in capacity to that of Sweden, one is fortunate in being able to narrow down the timeframe to the post-industrial era. No comprehensive modern welfare state has emerged prior to the beginning of the Industrial Era in a country as of yet. As such, the American Industrial Revolution, beginning around the last decade of the 18th century, is an excellent starting point at which to analyze American economics up until the modern era. At the start of the American Industrial Revolution, according to the United States census of 1790, around 90% of the population was employed in the agrarian sector. (United States Census 1790) In 1890, the number of non-farm workers surpassed the number of farm workers for the first time, and, 200 years later, in 1990, farmers made up less than three percent of the US labor force. Much as in Sweden, capital investment and technological advancements, paralleled by the expansion of business interests and the rise of corporations, would drive industrial progress. (Investopedia 2015)

It was the second stage of the American Industrial Revolution, however, which began to come to fruition nearly a century later that would prove the defining study site for American emergence into a modern industrial society. This was preceded by the increasing urbanization of American populations in the period between the Civil War and World War 1. Along with this wave of urbanization came an increasing concentration of industrial facilities, a greater focus on sanitation, the rise of unionization, and the communication revolution that came about with the implementation of the radio and the telephone into everyday life. This would see the start of a wave of economic growth in the United States, that, despite a significant slippage following the

Stock Market Crash in 1929 and the subsequent Great Depression, would rebound by the end of World War 2 and emerge into the dominant post-war economy. (Scranton 2000)

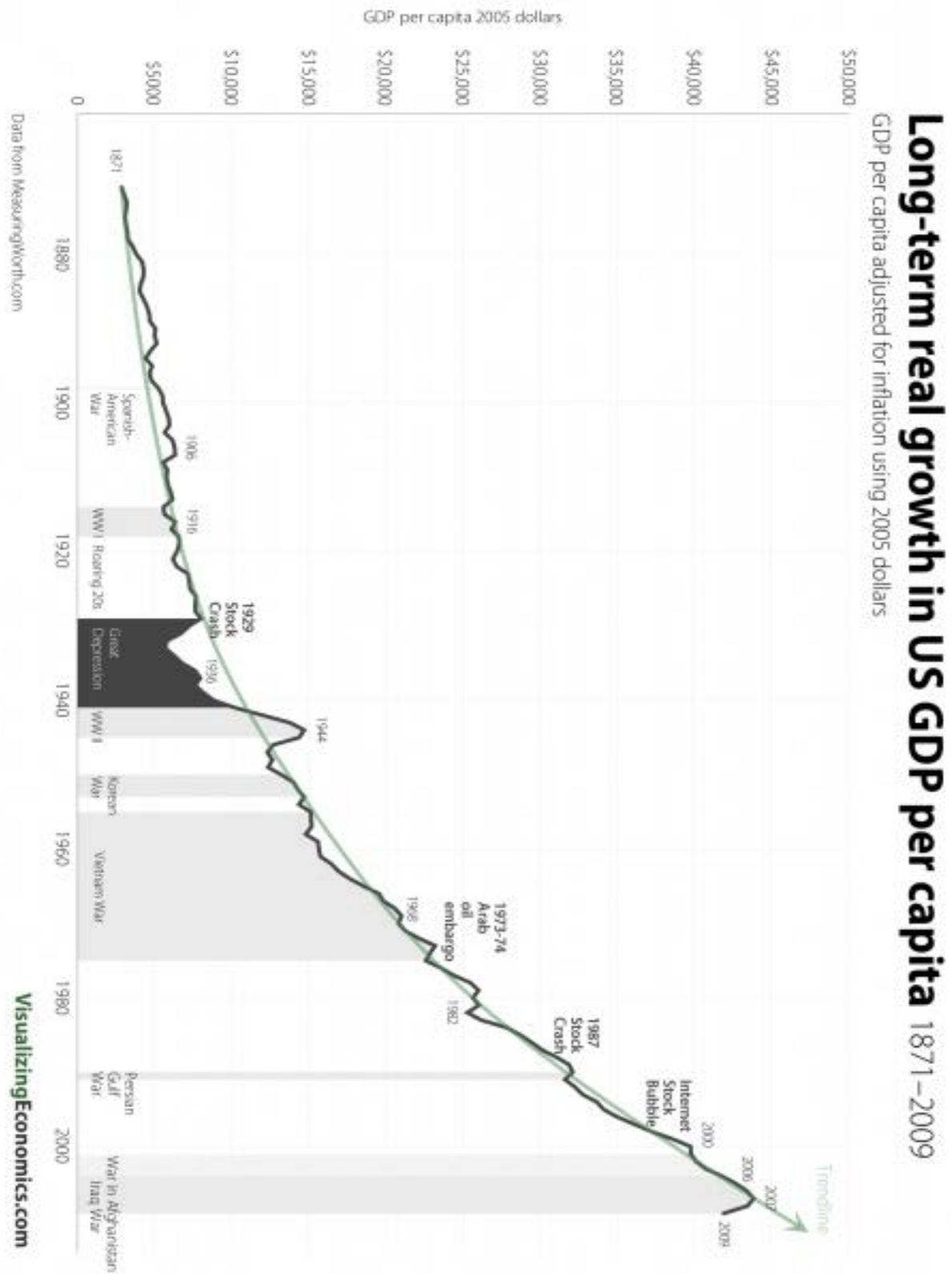


Figure 5: US GDP per capita growth 1871-2009 (Visualizing Economics 2011)

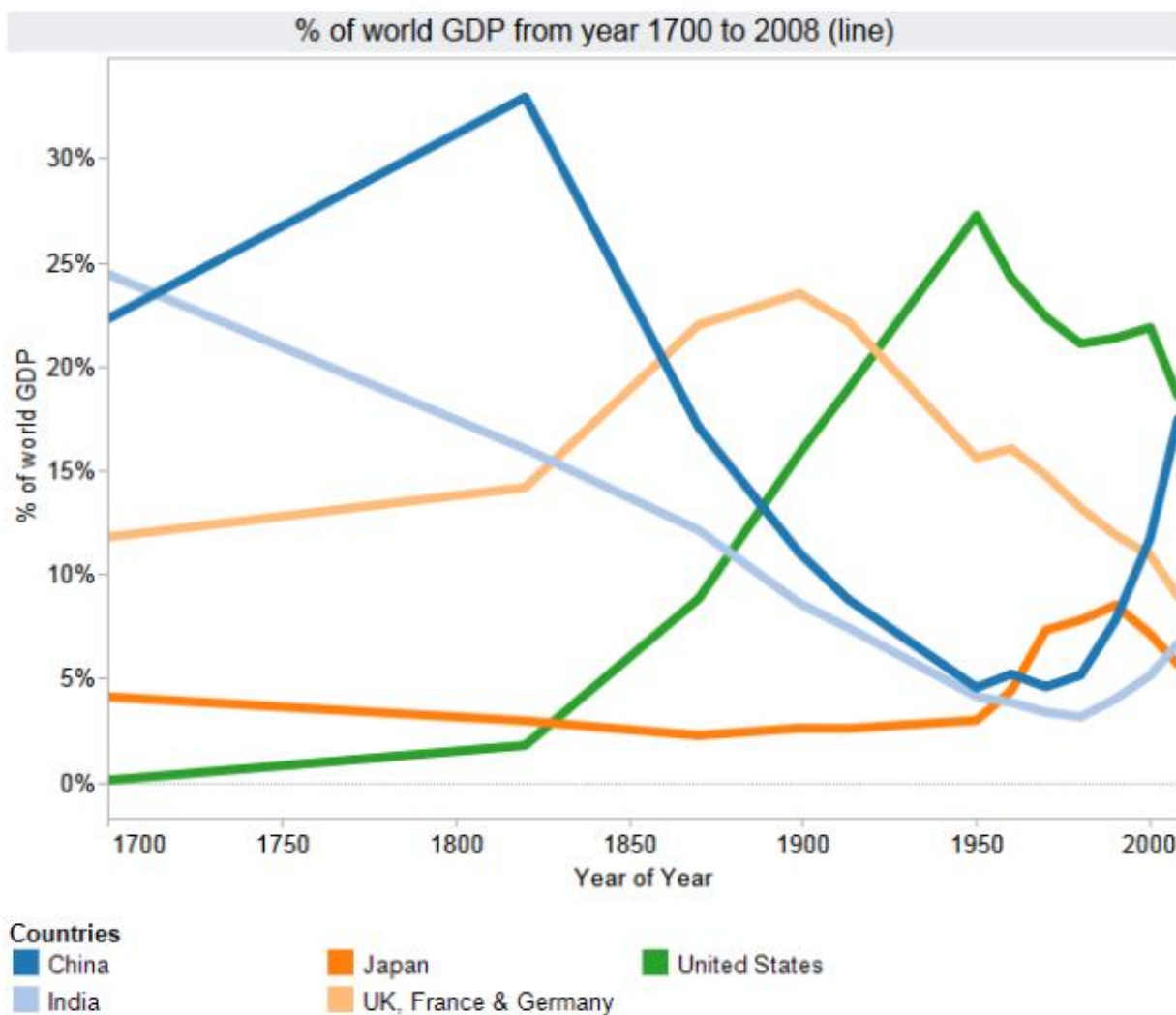


Figure 6: Various countries and regions' percentage of global GDP over time (Drabble 2016)

In this, America shares similarities with Sweden in that the events of World War Two, while radically different for both countries, with Sweden being firmly in the German geopolitical arena, and America at the forefront of the forces of the larger Allied western nations, would instigate strong economic development in the post-war arena, in large part due to the relative lack of population loss and, most importantly, infrastructure damage, taken during the events of the war. (Government of Sweden 2016c) In many cases, industries developed in such a way as to increase productivity and output due to the demands of the war efforts for both nations.

(Magnusson 2000, 202) Combined with the aforementioned similarities in economic outlooks following the co-occurring post-war boom for both Sweden and the United States, it is only logical to look closely at the period directly following World War 2 as a strong candidate for inclusion as a part of the formati of Swedish social welfare.

Swedish Demographics

Separating ethnic demographic data for the country of Sweden is a particularly difficult task, given that there are no official statistics on ethnicity gathered by the Swedish government. Regardless, a discerning investigator can extrapolate from a variety of statistics, whether peripheral or privately gathered measurements, the relative amount of immigrants in the population and the ethnic arrangement of the Swedish population. The Swedish government does keep statistics on the numbers of immigrants coming into the country each year, and has done so since 1851. At this early period, immigration into Sweden was next to nothing, while the population sat at just over three and a half million individuals. ([Government of Sweden 2016d](#)) A significant spike in emigration, primarily to the United States and also Australia, occurred in the years characterized by the agricultural disaster known in Sweden as the “Final Famine”; a devastating event that triggered a significant migration of a large portion of the population, which during the period of time around 1866-1868 fled the country for these hopefully greener pastures. (Akenson 2011) This period would not see the end of large-scale Swedish emigration-rather, only the beginning, as large numbers of Swedes would emigrate to America from 1880-onwards, until the flow finally ceased in the years leading up to World War I.

Emigration and immigration would each remain low up until the post-World War II period, at which point immigration would see a steady increase as Swedish economic prosperity

beckoned. This would eventually lead to the government placing controls on immigration in the early 1970s, requiring proof of employment offers and housing arrangements, among other things, before individuals and families would be considered for approval for immigration.

(Government of Sweden 2016d)

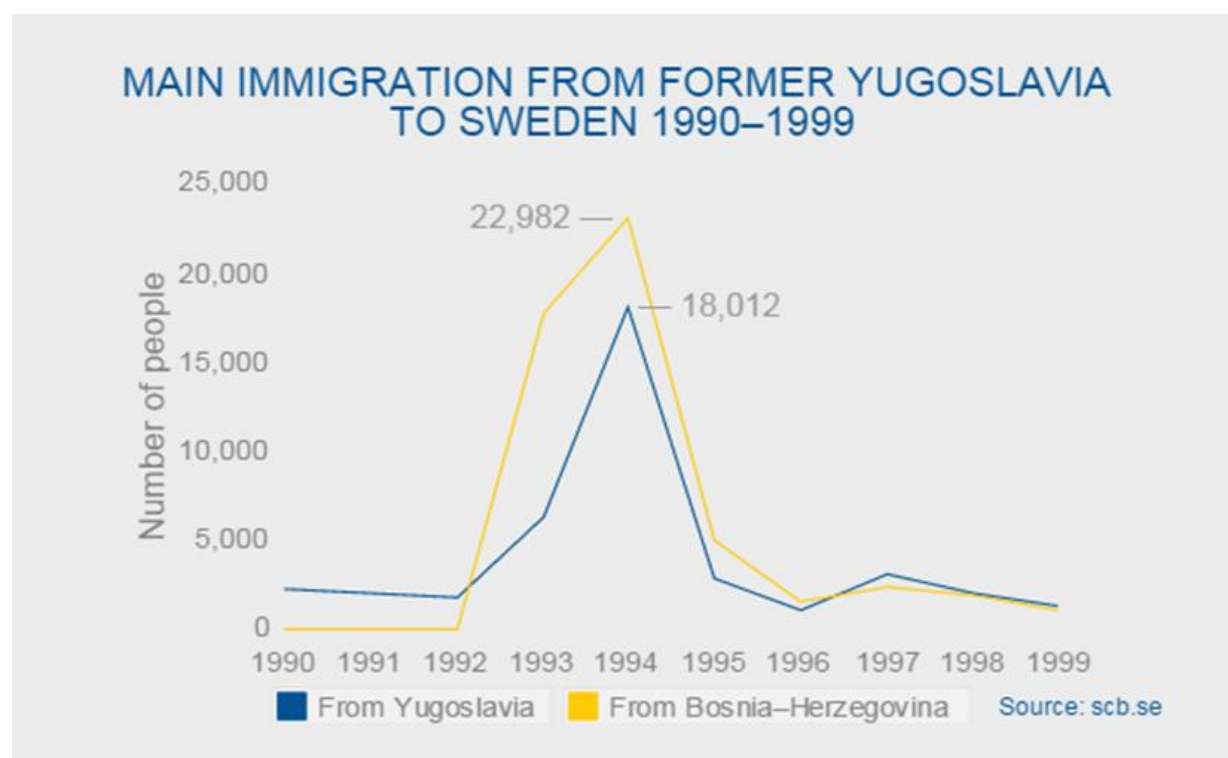


Figure 7: Yugoslavian immigration to Sweden (Government of Sweden 2016d)

The start of the modern-day skyrocketing of immigration to Scandinavia arrived in the 1980s, when Sweden was one of the leading countries in taking in large numbers of asylum-seeking individuals from conflict zones across the world, whether it be Chileans fleeing the regime of Pinochet (45,000 Chileans currently reside in Sweden), Somali migrants, Iranian and Iraqi civilians fleeing the brutal Iran-Iraq war (34,000 total from these countries alone in the 1980s), and others from countries as diverse as Eritrea and Lebanon. (Government of Sweden 2016d) Later, in the 1990s, Sweden would see a net uptick in gross immigration and in per

capita immigration ratios, with over 100,000 Bosnians alone being granted asylum during the decade.

This pattern is still manifesting to this day, as the Swedes continue to take in refugees seeking safe haven as they flee from modern combat zones, such as Syria, Iraq, and Eritrea. Only Germany took in more asylum seekers in 2014 than Sweden, despite a dramatic population disparity between Sweden and Germany, and many of the countries in its regional sphere. In 2015, every fifth immigrant was from Syria alone, and the massive influx of refugees, especially recently, as begun to manifest stresses in the general population. While surveys indicate that the vast majority of Swedes approve of immigration as a whole, these same surveys also indicate that the overall population feels as though the integration of immigrant populations could use refinement on a variety of levels. (Government of Sweden 2016d) Unrest over this issue has been seen as recently as the 2013 riots in the suburbs of Stockholm. Overall, the trend of ethnic Swedish demographics has been one of a gradually escalating increase, with modest immigration activity through the 1960s, speeding up and growing larger and larger into the modern day. This trend of increased immigration has contributed as well to the overwhelmingly urban nature of the Swedish population-more than 85% in 2015. (World Bank 2016b) How Swedes handle the growing and concentrated influx of culturally different peoples in their society will be one of the defining challenges of the upcoming decade for the country as a whole.

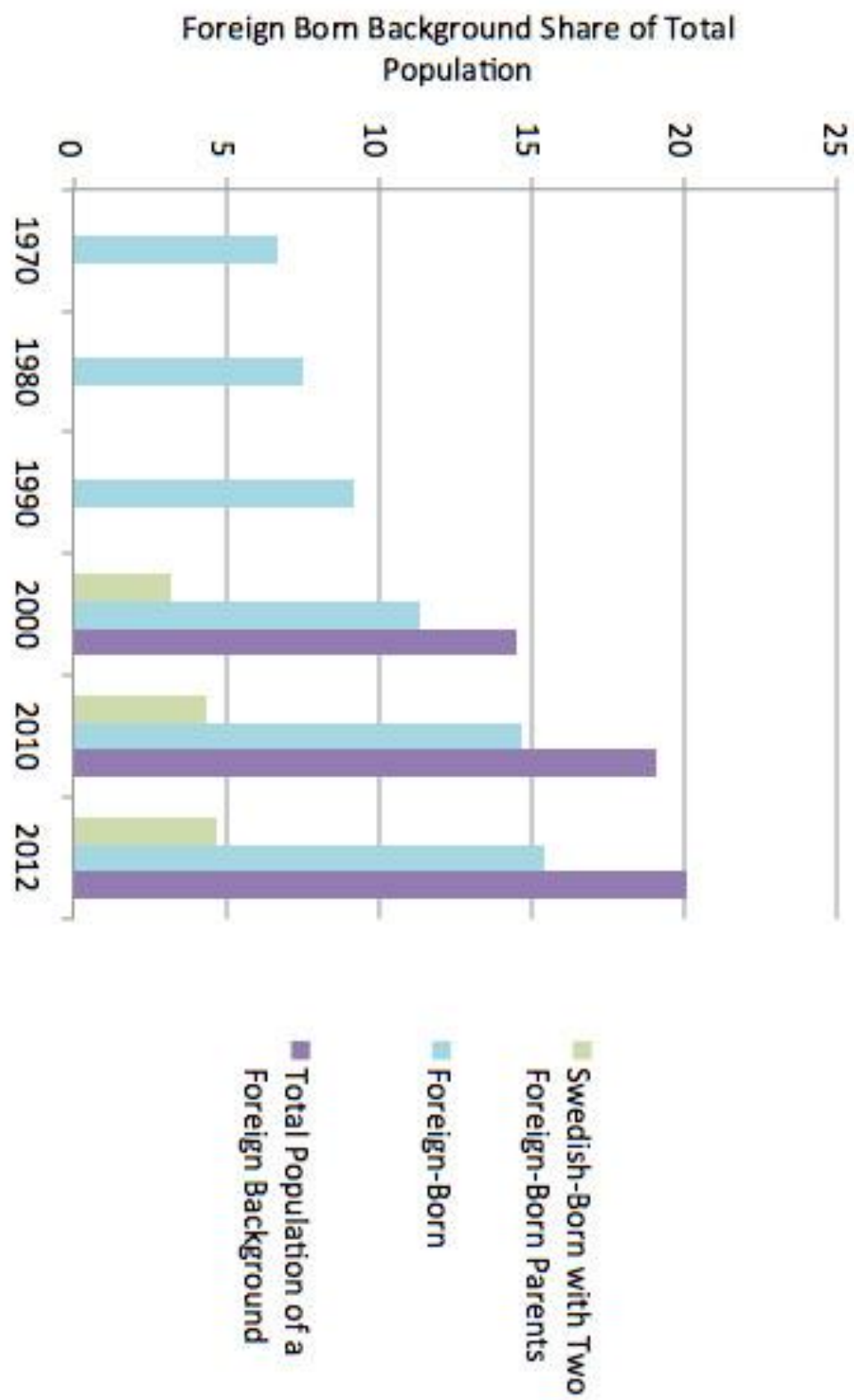


Figure 8: Citizen birthplaces over time in Sweden (Fredlund-Blomst 2014)

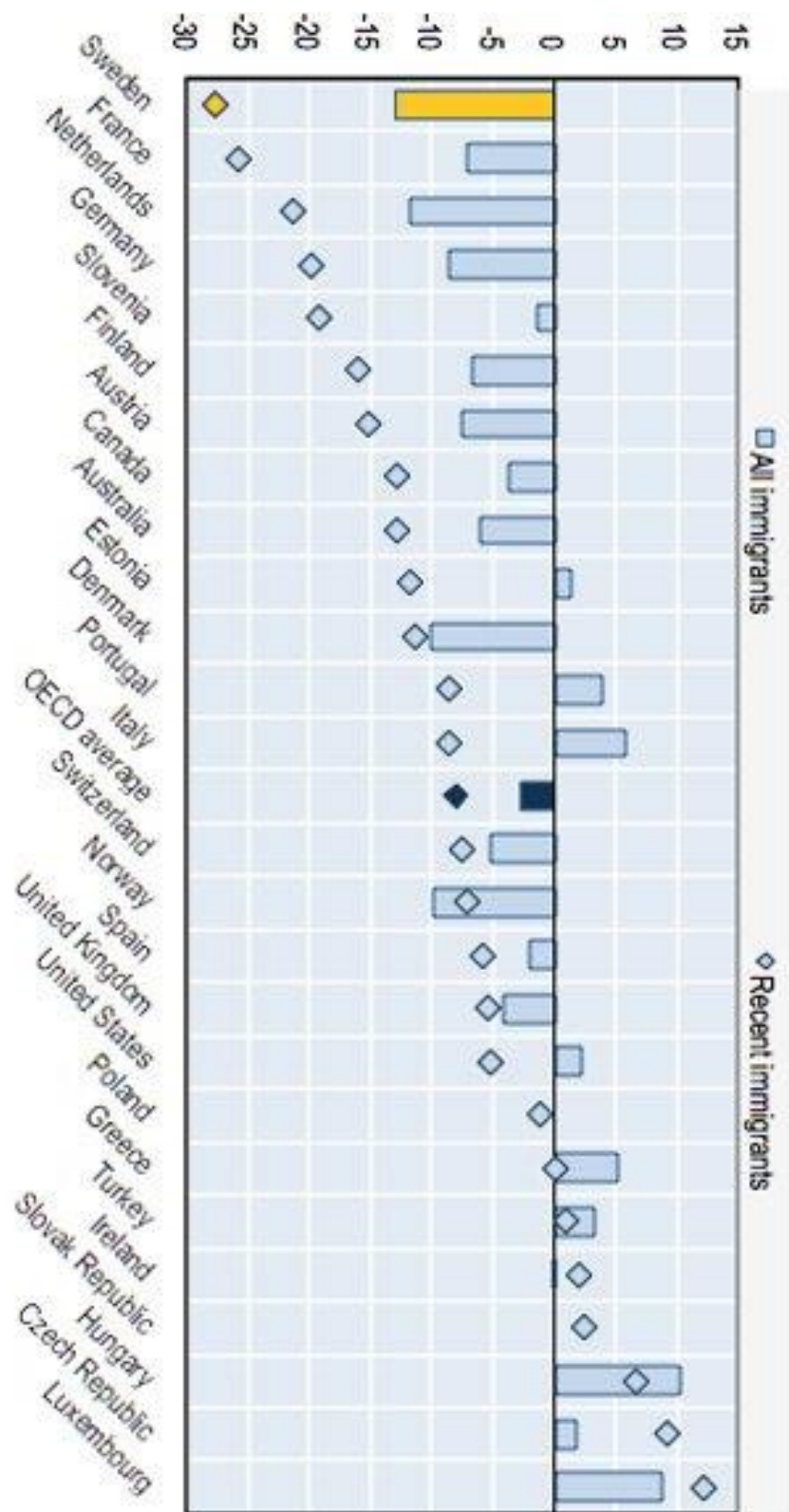


Figure 9: Immigration over time versus recent immigration in Europe (OECD 2012)

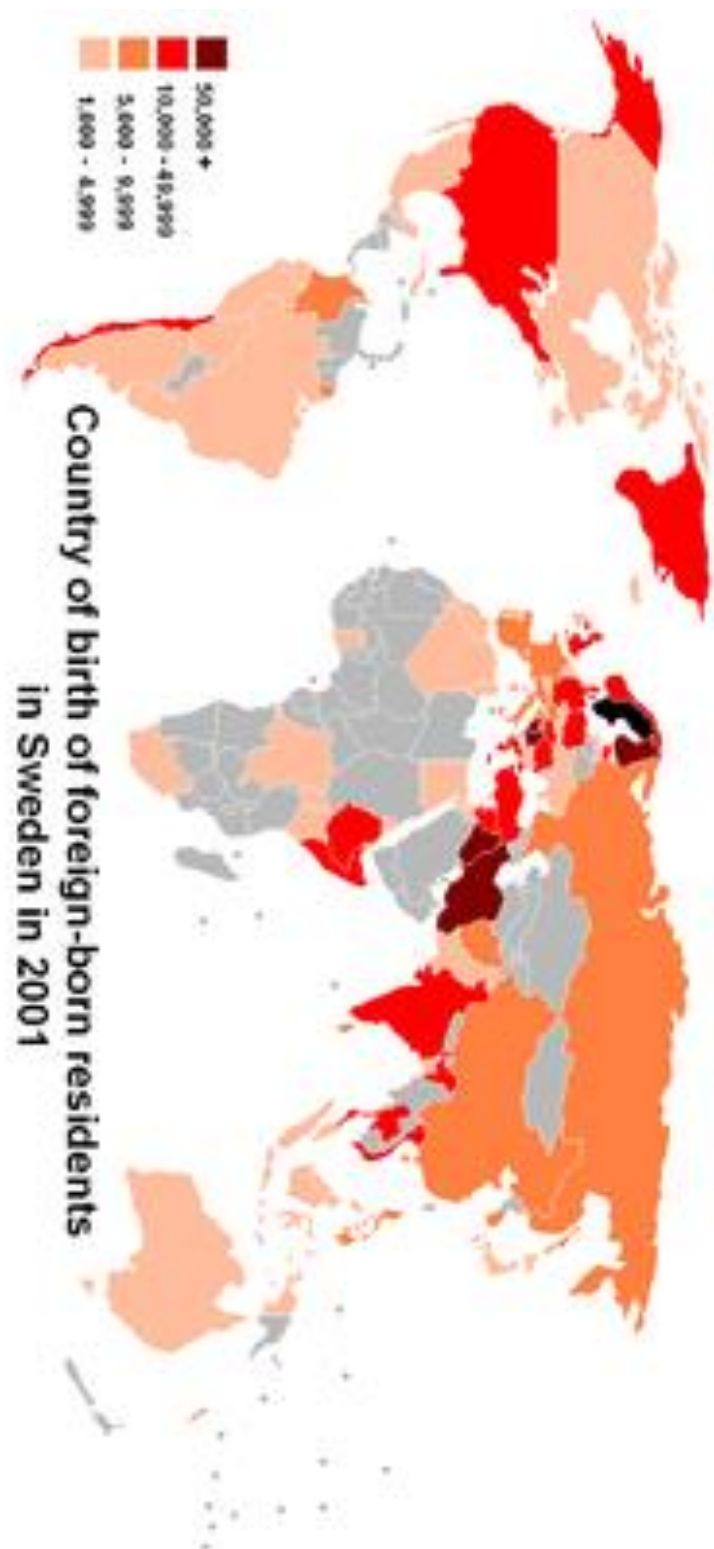


Figure 10: Birthplace of foreign-born Swedish residents (Statistics Sweden 2016a)

American Demographics

America, unlike Sweden, is well known worldwide as a melting pot, a diverse assortment of various peoples from a large number of world cultures. While slightly less urbanized than Sweden, at an estimated 81% in 2015, America still experiences growing and concentrated minority populations, and has a long history, unlike Sweden, of significant portions of the population being of different ethnicities. The most historically noteworthy minority population in the United States has been the African American population-originally imported largely as slaves for southern plantation work, etc. this population has grown consistently over the last two-plus decades. In addition to the black population, other groups, such as Hispanics, persons of Asian descent, and Native American populations have formed varying sizeable and significant minorities in the United States throughout time and into the modern era. In the present day, one American in six is deemed Hispanic in origin, and Native American populations have historically existed, of course, since the dawn of the United States as a formalized nation-today they consist of around one percent of the total population of the United States, which is calculated at just under 309 million in 2010, and 321 million in 2015. According to the 2010 United States Census, more than 1 in 10 American citizens were black, and one in twenty was of Asian descent. The majority white population, as defined by the Census Bureau, registered just under 64% of the population in 2010, with that number decreasing steadily through successive census counts. (US Census 2016a) This trend is expected to continue; The Economist estimated that by 2050 one in four Americans will be Hispanic, and that does not even account for potential growth in other minority groups. (Rennie 2015)

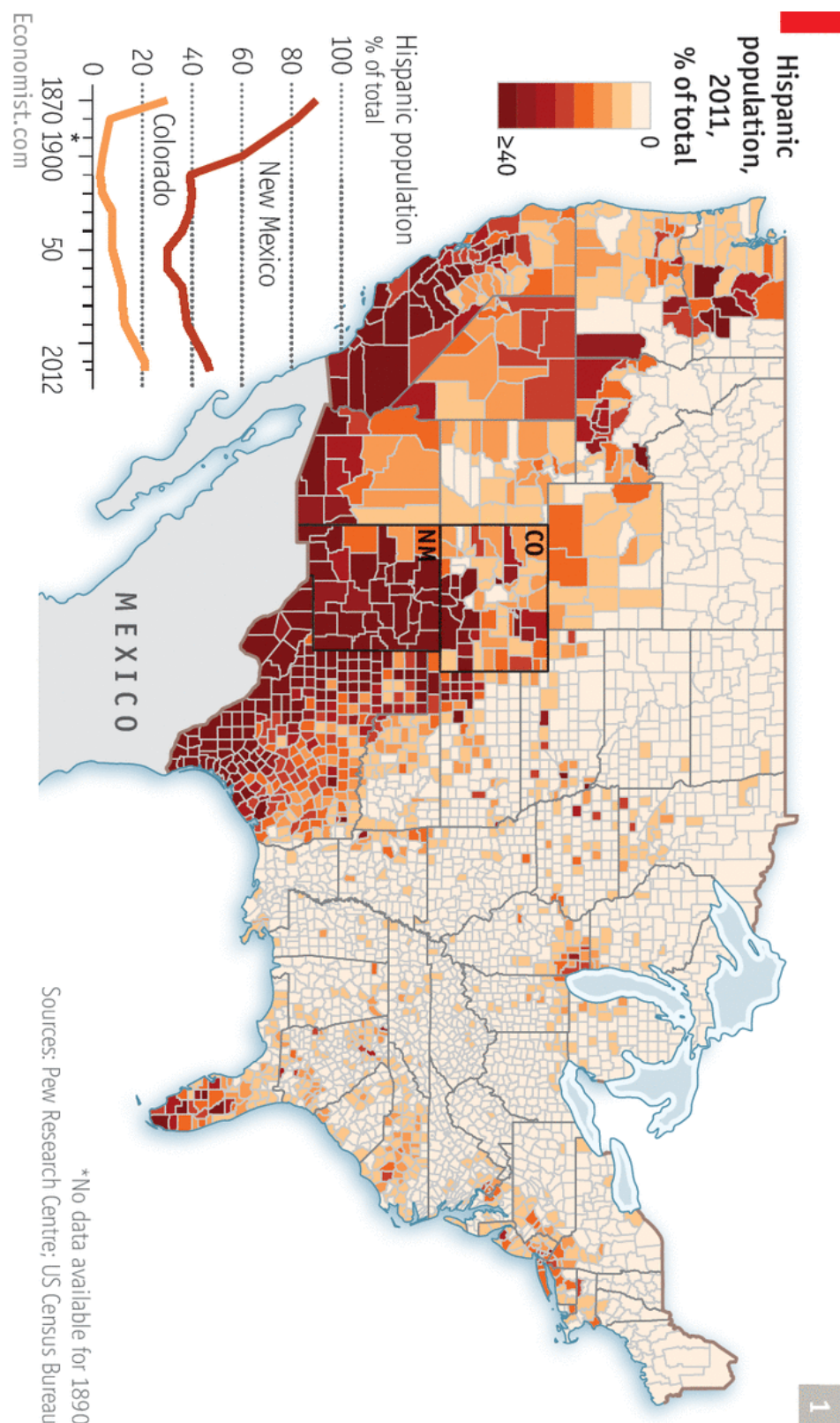


Figure 11: Hispanic population density in the United States (Rennie 2015)

DISTRIBUTION OF THE AFRICAN AMERICAN POPULATION IN THE UNITED STATES

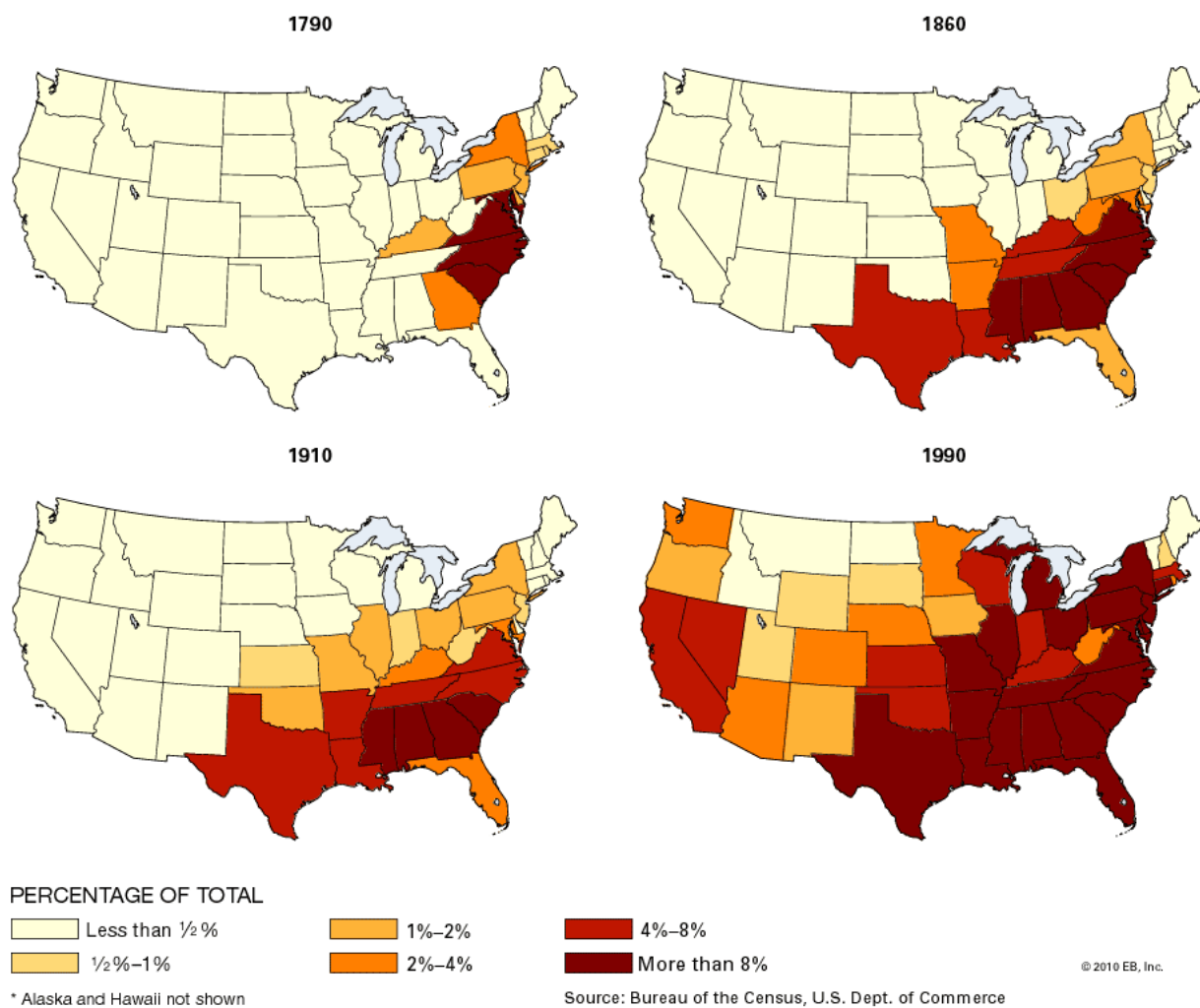


Figure 12: African-American distribution in the United States (Encyclopedia Britannica Kids 2016)

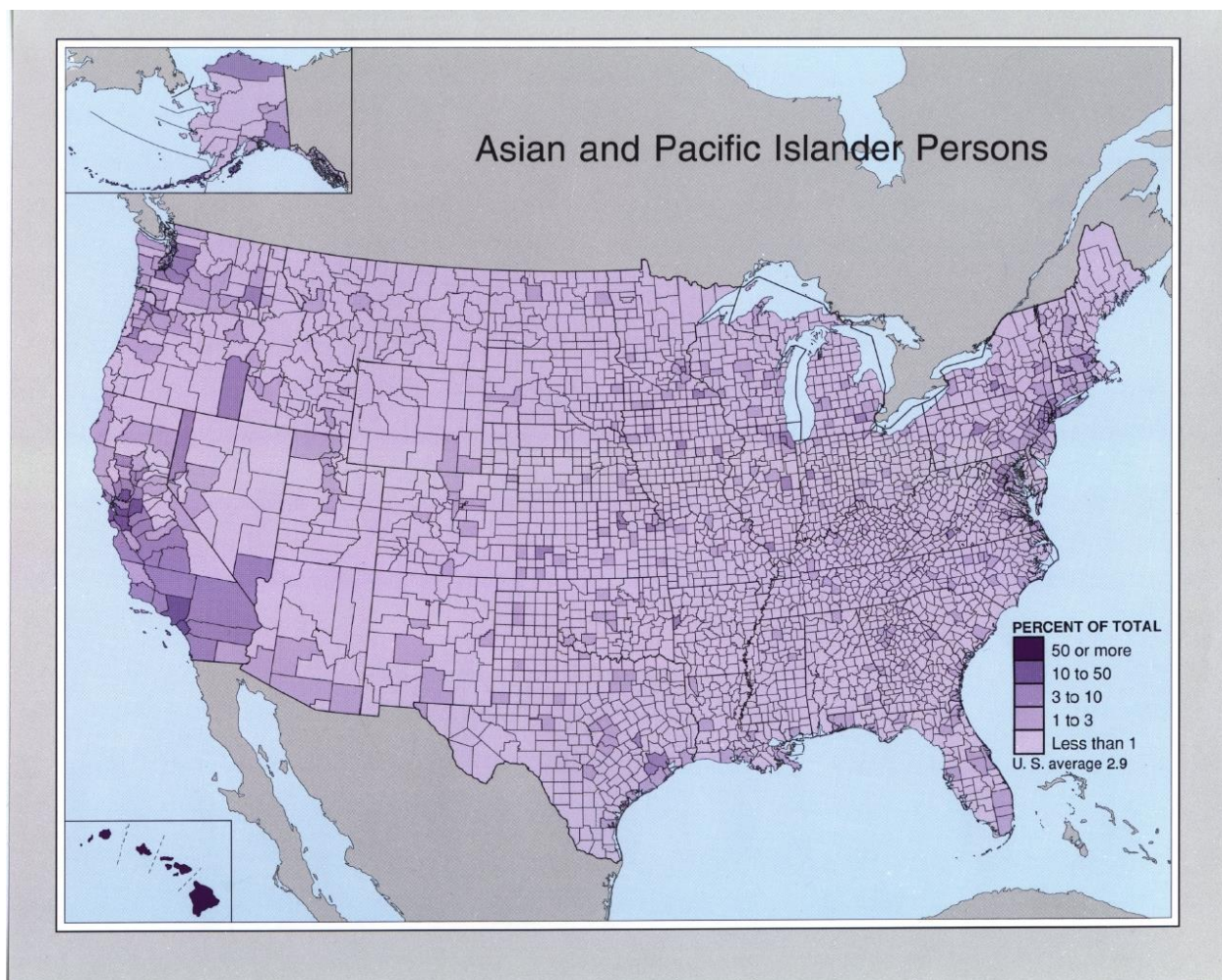


Figure 12: Asian-American population density in the United States (United States Census 2015)

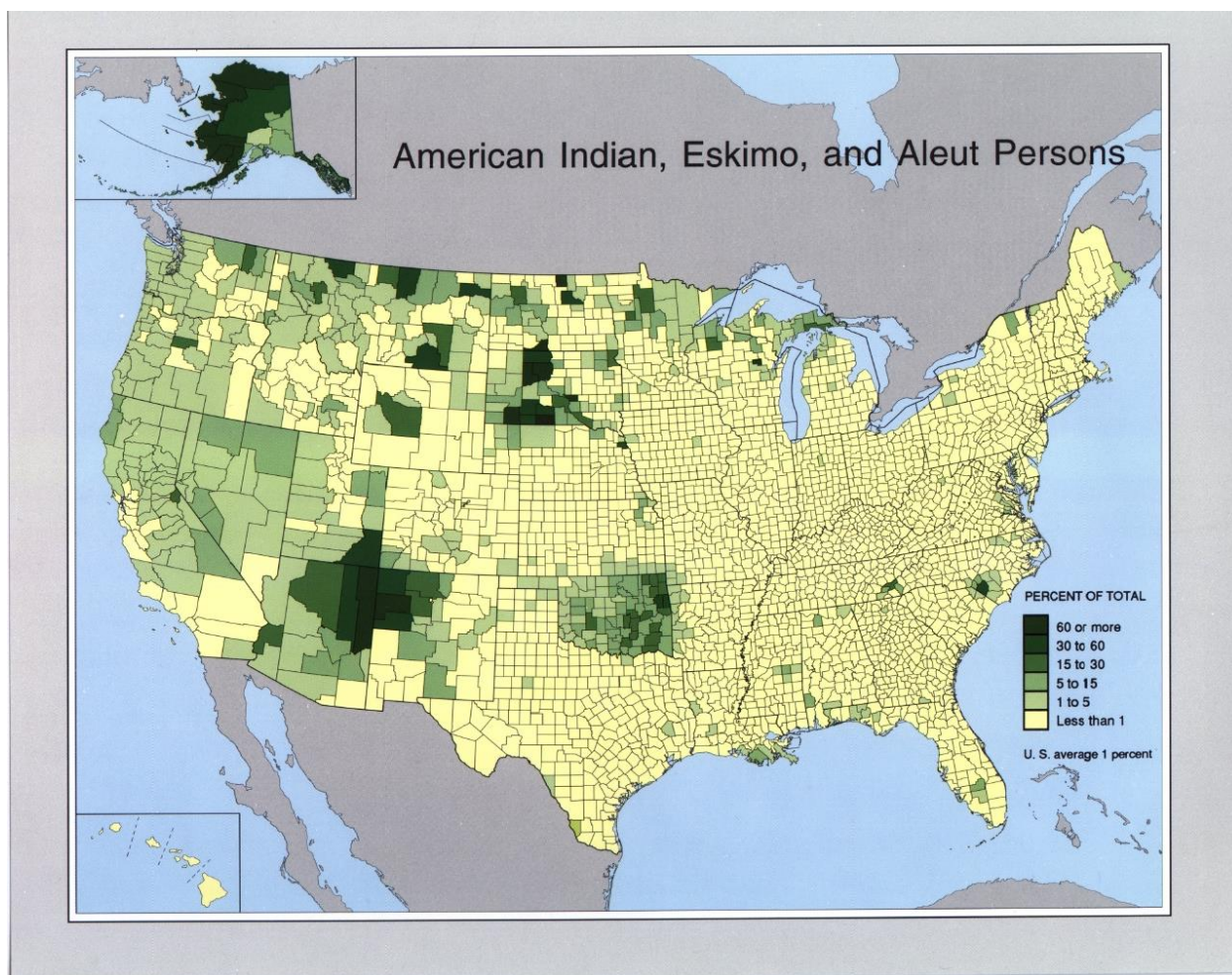


Figure 13: Native American population density in the United States (United States Census 2015)

Year	Size of Immigrant Population (Millions)	Immigrant Share of Total U.S. Population (%)
1970	9.6	4.7
1980	14.1	6.2
1990	19.8	7.9
2000	31.1	11.1
2010	40.0	12.9
2014	42.4	13.3

Figure 14: Immigrant population share over time in the United States (Fredlund-Blomst 2014)

Number of Immigrants and Their Share of the Total U.S. Population, 1850-2014

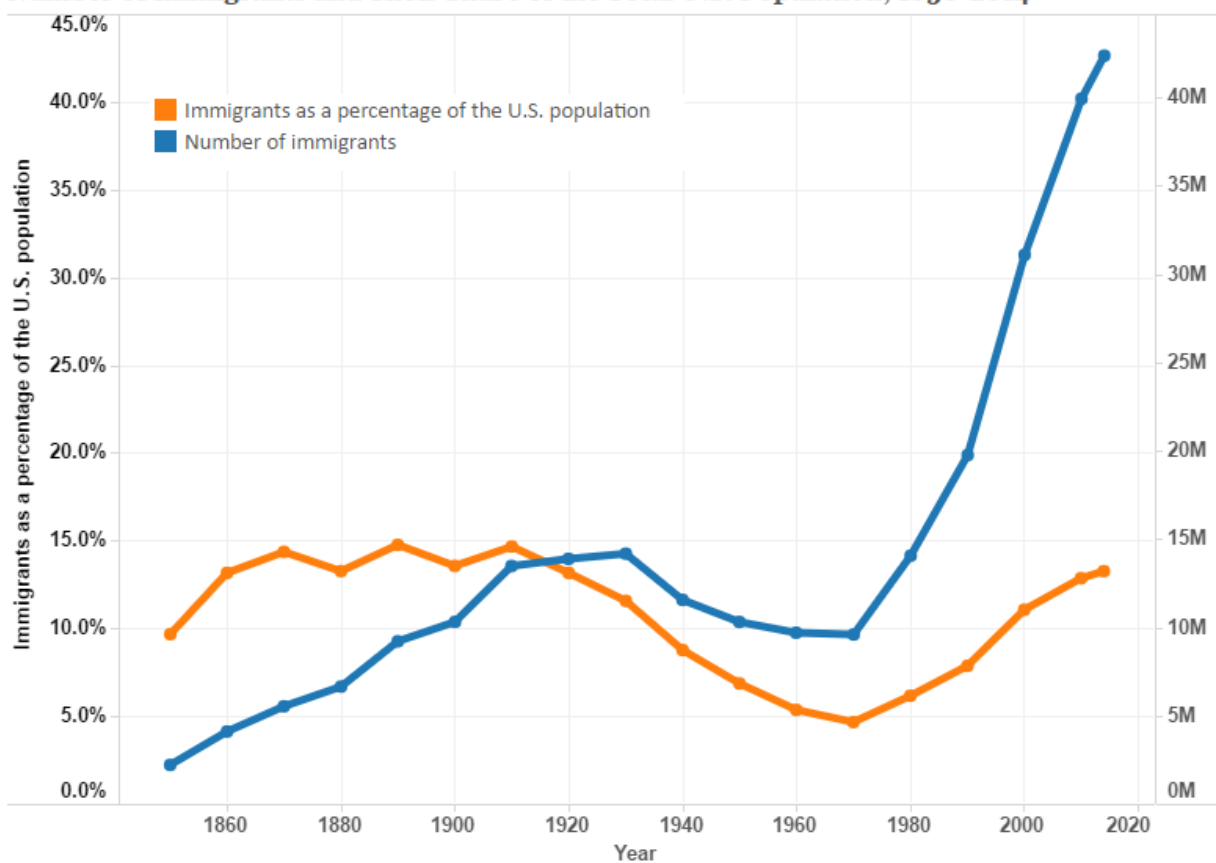


Figure 15: Immigrant population versus percentage of the population in the United States (Migration Policy Institute 2015)

Year	Size of Immigrant Population (Millions)	Immigrant Share of Total U.S. Population (%)
1970	9.6	4.7
1980	14.1	6.2
1990	19.8	7.9
2000	31.1	11.1
2010	40.0	12.9
2014	42.4	13.3

Figure 16: Decadal representation of Immigrant population versus share of the United States population (Batalova and Zong 2016)

From these charts, it is easy to establish that, like Sweden, the United States has a significant immigrant population. Unlike Sweden, however, it is also evident that the United States' significant immigrant populations have persisted further back in the history of the country. While slaves are unusual immigrants compared to what are today considered modern day immigrants, or even Swedish refugee-classified immigrants, forced immigration is still immigration by all accounts, census statistics show that the black population in 1800 was 900,000 out of little more than 5.1 million Americans. This indicates that the American immigrant population is both highly significant and endures all the way back to the foundation of the United States in the 1770s. This is a sociological and demographic phenomena that very obviously can lead to the affectation of social policies and agendas that could very conceivably affect social welfare policy in a nation such as the United States. (United States Census 1790)

Methodology

In the practice of the analysis of the rise of a social system as long in the making and as complex as the social policies of an entire modern nation, as is such with the Swedish welfare state, a particular manner of generalization must be embraced on a certain level at the very start of a study in order to reach a feasible conclusion, lest one become bogged down in the mess of mundane details affecting the peculiarities of such a large entity as the social welfare system of an entire modern country consisting of millions of people. For example, while it is entirely possible that tariff levels on imported grain in the mid-1800s may have had a trickle-down effect leading to the promotion of Swedish agriculture at the time, and that may have been a precursor to some sort of welfare relief among the hungry poor, it is more likely that that is but a spurious variable distracting from a more pressing happenstance that more conclusively led to the establishment of the modern Swedish welfare state. One must not only keep in mind the potentially distracting nature of smaller variables like the aforementioned tariff levels on imported grain, but also the potentially distracting nature of larger more significant seeming variables.

It is with such an outlook that the analysis of the Swedish welfare state has been crafted; with the specific intent of determining these particular significant groupings of events and periods of crucial and significant importance, that the underlying aspects mainly driving the creation of the Swedish welfare state can be identified, collected, summarized, and analyzed. The matter by which this must be undertaken is almost entirely qualitative at its most basic, beginning level. Quantitative facts, such as economic data concerning post-war prosperity, population and demographic metrics, and election data concerning differences between Swedish and American political practices, are useful to the analysis primarily once the primary areas of

focus have been identified qualitatively. I argue that unless qualitative analysis can be used to align identified phenomena and their respective timeframes together to establish a causal link between the individual phenomena and the greater, cumulative, long-term effort of the creation of the welfare state itself, no truly overarchingly meaningful conclusions can be reached.

These conclusions, however, can only be achieved through the accumulation of a series of what are highly important quantitative statistics covering the multi-faceted conditions surrounding the two welfare states seen and discussed in Sweden and the United States. The most important of these critical quantitative variables are demographic, economic, and political. Although the aforementioned qualitative aspect of the analysis is of primary importance, the combination of relevant data sets from these areas, comparing and contrasting between United States' statistics and Swedish statistics, can provide essential causal links, demonstrating both reasons for and against the creation and perpetration of the relative welfare states in both countries. It is for this reason that we will attempt to establish a significant correlative link between racial statistics, welfare spending, and many other statistical areas in discerning the "push" behind the conception and continuation of these states.

Concerning the formational conditions surrounding the rise of the Swedish welfare state, first, one must start by analyzing the changes necessary to begin the formation of such a social welfare system. It is logically conclusive, given the natural uniqueness of the Swedish welfare state, that a particular arrangement of events characterized by their selectively and consecutively occurring nature must be present in such an environment in order to ensure the formation of varying social policies forming the actual underlying bedrock of the Swedish-style social welfare state. Given this logical assumption, it can then be assumed that a confluence of events from a variety of different spheres-economic, political, demographic, etc.- impacting the creation and

maintenance of the welfare state spheres would have to comport themselves in such a way as to formulate the gestation of said welfare state. This identification of specific catalysts to the creation of the oft-aforementioned social welfare system is best facilitated by first determining the timeframe of the establishment of the social welfare system. This is less a matter of academic investigation and more a simpler matter of a thorough examination of Swedish history, specifically historical social welfare policymaking. Once potentially relevant have been identified-through careful perusal of the historical record-a prudent researcher can then look deeper into the factors behind these occurrences and determine the significant impacting factors, be they economic, political, external, internal, etc. To summarize:

- The timeframe of the establishment of the Swedish welfare state can be determined through a recording of the timeframe in which the policies and relevant events that contributed to the structure of the Swedish welfare state were enacted or occurred.
- After determining the correct period, a researcher can then formulate a listing of potential spheres of analysis through which to attempt to discern causality concerning the aforementioned sphere and the formation of the welfare state. For example, economics, politics, international relations, etc.
- After determining the specific sphere of analysis, for example, economics, that influenced the creation of the welfare state, more precise analysis can be undertaken to determine both a timeframe of consequential events, policies, and proceedings, and a collection of consequential events and proceedings. For example, perhaps World War 2 closely coincides with the implementation of significant Swedish social welfare policies.

- After this narrowing down of analyses has completed, the researcher should be left with, assuming a thorough approach to all of the aforementioned steps, a comprehensive listing of potential significant factors leading to the formation of the Swedish welfare state.
- These candidate significant factors can then be carefully analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively to determine whether or not they provided significant impetus towards the formation of the Swedish welfare state. As stated before, there is a significant amount of difficulty and care must be taken in attempting to determine the difference between variables contributing to the formation and evolution of the Swedish welfare state and variables contributing to the evolution of the Swedish state, economy, and society as a whole that may not have a significant impact on the welfare state itself.
- The significant factors can then be compared to their American counterparts in an attempt to determine with finality whether the country of the United States has had a window of opportunity, as defined by a significant similarity in formational significant factors, for the formation of a Swedish-style social welfare state. It is then a relatively simple matter to determine either the correlation in the American social welfare system, or the lack thereof. In such a case as the latter, it is postulated that the difference would be readily identifiable based on the comparison of significant formational factors.

Through this analytical framework a variety of goals can be achieved. First, the determination of the timeframe of the establishment of the Swedish welfare state. Second, the identification of possible significant factors in said establishment. Finally, weeding out of these factors to determine which are specifically related to the formation of the Swedish welfare state.

These factors can then be compared to their American counterparts, both qualitatively and quantitatively, in the hopes of determining whether the United States has had a window in which the assumption of a Swedish-style social welfare state would have been feasible, and if such a window does not exist, then it is hoped that continued analysis of the aforementioned factors can lead to a satisfactory explanation.

Results

In keeping with the first step of the proscribed methodology for determining the significant factors behind the rise of the modern Swedish welfare state, it can be concluded that the best course of action is to first identify events primarily critical to the development of the Swedish welfare system. As such, it can be firmly noted that academic consensus and historical record place the early concrete development, policy-wise, of the modern Swedish welfare state to be around the turn of the 20th century, shortly following the rise of the Social Democrat party which would rapidly grow to champion and drive these changes. Some of these policy enactments are, in chronological order: in 1909 male suffrage was established, followed by industrial safety laws (1912), old-age pension insurance (1913), universal suffrage for men and women (1918), the establishment of the eight hour work day (1919), laws on collective bargaining (1928), maternity benefits and maintenance allowances (1937), two weeks of holiday leave minimum 1948), and general child allowances (1948). As the Swedish economy began to boom in the post-war early 1950s period, additional reforms would arise, including three weeks mandatory vacation (1953), national health insurance (1955), a forty five hour working week and earnings-related pensions (1960), housing subsidies for families with children (1969), job security legislation (1974), and reduced pension age (1976). (Heclo and Madsen 1987, 8)

Throughout this period of policy implementation, refinement of previously implemented social welfare policies was on going; the workweeks' length was steadily shortened, mandated vacation time was steadily extended, and benefits were increased. (Heclo and Madsen 1987, 8) After this time period, policy implementation took a back seat to policy refinement-new statutes and policies were introduced less often, and existing policies and social welfare stratagems were refined to allow for a more functional system. Therefore, having established a timeline for the

concrete enactment of the social welfare system in Sweden, it was then prudent to look at this time period, stretching roughly from way back in the early 1900s to the late 1970s, and peruse this era through the lens of Swedish politics, policy, demographics, economics, international relations, land reform, international trade, conflict, immigration, and whatever other factors could potentially be significantly applicable to the establishment of this welfare system.

In the following examination of this era concerning varying potential applicable areas of influence on the formation of the Swedish welfare state, a series of applicable areas were identified as potentially housing more specific significant contributory factors to the rise of the Swedish welfare state. These areas arrived at as potential candidates after months of analysis of a multitude of previously cited works throughout this paper, were, specifically, land reform, economic, political, and demographic. Land reform was selected based on the seeming importance of the great and rather unusual for the time Swedish land reforms of the 1700s, namely the *storskifte* of 1749 and the cumulative Land Survey ordinance of 1783. (Magnusson 2000, 15) It was postulated that these events would have had contributed to a socioeconomic impetus driving the establishment of the modern day welfare state in Sweden.

No examination of the formative period of practically any social welfare system is complete without a comprehensive analysis of the economic factors included in redistributive efforts at the state level. Sweden is no different, with a number of critical economic events occurring during the same period as the establishment of the welfare state itself. Among these are the Great Depression of the 1930s and the post-war economic boom of the 1950s, 1960s, and the early 1970s; up until the oil crisis and other events curtailed it somewhat.

A third area of interest, politics, is readily apparent upon discovering that during this formational period of Swedish welfare, a single party, the Social Democrat party, was in power in Sweden for the greater part of the period mentioned previously in which the concrete policy enactment took place, and were constantly in power in the Riksdag from 1932-1976; the primary foundational period of Swedish social welfare policymaking. That this party was and is even still today a primary driver of modern social welfare policy in Sweden would seem to indicate their relation to the establishment of the welfare state.

The final identified area of significant interest, in the important effect it might have had on the formation of the Swedish welfare state, was demographics; up until recently and certainly during the aforementioned foundational period of the early-middle 1900s, Sweden experienced relatively low levels of immigration, whereas the United States has experienced higher levels of continuous immigration and the population itself has evolved into one of the largest countries on Earth, cresting 323 million as of July 2016. (US Census 2016b) Sweden on the other hand, only now approaches a population of 10 million, with official reports estimating the population at around 9.8 million as of April 2016. (Statistics Sweden 2016b) Given prevailing racial attitudes in both countries, this required further consideration concerning the potential importance of these variables to both study site countries. This is especially critical given the significant role possessed by racial bias in social welfare formation or lack thereof. Many who analyze redistributive efforts have noted the influence of racial disparity and attitudes in the formation and evolution of welfare states throughout history and across the world.

After the collection of these important factors for consideration, further work was done to attempt to determine the legitimacy of the proposed areas as actual significant influences on the rise of the welfare state. Of the four aforementioned areas that were considered, three were

deemed conclusively significant as indicated by the research; economics, politics, and demographics. Land reform, while significantly important to the history of Sweden itself and what can only be assumed are a multitude of other geographic, historical, and sociological areas of study, was deemed to be less than significant to the study of the formation of the Swedish welfare state. Despite the highly unusual nature of the reforms for their time period, being remarkably egalitarian and very much in contrast with overarching attitudes across Europe, no significant connection was found in Swedish history to suggest a land reform jumpstarted a social impetus for increasing redistributive policy.

Concerning the effect of economics on the rise of the social welfare system in Sweden, several key time periods were identified that were crucial to its successful implementation. Firstly, the industrial advances around the beginning of the nineteenth century, which laid the framework for modern Swedish industrialization, would be an important contributor to future highly significant economic upswings that would co-occur with and help to drive policy implementation. Secondly, the Great Depression and World War II would provide both a taste of hardship and the precursors to the expansion of the global economy. In addition, the events of and the relatively advantageous position held by Sweden following the conclusion of World War Two would lead to the most crucial of all of the economic indicators of the significant effect of economics on the formation of Swedish welfare policies; the post-World War Two economic boom, which would go hand in hand through the mid-1970s with the driving by the Social Democrats of the meat of their social welfare agenda.

Demographics are, and have been, another key driver of Swedish social welfare policy in the era of the evolution of its welfare state. As explained in detail in a variety of academic articles, not the least of which a study by the Harvard Institute of Economic Research titled *Why*

Doesn't the US Have A European-Style Welfare State?, racial concerns belied by underlying demographic arrangements can be a key contributor towards a lack of wealth redistribution towards the poor-which would hamper, not help, the formation of a social welfare system such as has been seen to arise in Sweden. In specific regard to the American comparison to the matter of the Swedish welfare state formation, the Harvard report specifically states that their findings indicated, "Racial animosity in the US makes redistribution to the poor...unappealing to many voters." (Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote 2001)

In an attempt to conclusively examine impact of racial bias on efforts to implement a comprehensively redistributive system in the Swedish style, statistical analysis was undertaken on the area of American demographics in an attempt to verify the significant impact of racial bias on economic redistribution. Firstly, an analysis of American demographics and their relationship to redistributive policy were deemed to be best examined on the state level, given comparative ease of access to data and the ability to sort states by overriding political influence, be it of the Democratic Party or the Republican Party. This was also thought to assist in determining whether right or left leaning political alignments are more or less inclined towards more redistributive welfare policies overall and also when sorted by racial group. Areas for which data was compiled include urban, rural, and total state populations, welfare spending per capita (defined as combined Medicaid and public assistance spending per capita), white, black, Asian, and Hispanic percentages of state populations, welfare spending as a percentage of state GDP, and whether or not the state is primarily Democratic or Republican. The latter was determined by the simple process of counting the number of representatives and senators from the respective states concerning their declared party; whichever party had the most representation was deemed to hold influence in that state.

From this data, a number of Pearson product-moment correlational analyses were undertaken, which tested the correlational values of per capita welfare spending with varying racial groups. Further specification was achieved by running the same tests but separating out the data for Republican and Democratic states, in attempt to reveal whether left-leaning, Democratic states, or right-leaning, Republican states, would be more inclined towards redistributive efforts. Additional metrics were taken to determine average spending on welfare as a percentage of GDP between Republican and Democratic states, non-white population percentages between Republican and Democratic states, specific racial group population percentages of states, and welfare spending per capita, again divided by state political alignment.

Given the Swedish example in particular, and similar European examples in general, it is expected that left-leaning parties are more likely to support a larger scale of expansion and development of welfare policies in the Swedish style. Considering again in combination with this the prior assertion that racial bias drives a *lack* of redistributive efforts in the Swedish style, it was hypothesized that the data analysis would show the left-leaning democratic states would have higher correlations between redistribution and minority populations. At the same time, it was expected that white populations would see higher rates of redistribution in right-leaning states, given their status as the majority ethnicity.

Results for the Pearson product moment correlational analyses indicate much of what was expected in terms of the demographically driven redistributive disparity among racial groups in the United States. Given the results below, it is plain to see that when adjusting for state political alignment, left leaning states show a higher correlational value between increased welfare spending and racial minority populations as opposed to the right-leaning states.

Per Capita Total Spending and White Population percentage .0049
 Per Capita Total Spending and Black Population percentage -.2131
 Per Capita Total Spending and Hispanic Population percentage -.0139
 Per Capita Total Spending and White Population percentage (Republican States) .1798
 Per Capita Total Spending and White Population percentage (Democratic States) .1547
 Per Capita Total Spending and Black Population percentage (Republican States) -.3705
 Per Capita Total Spending and Black Population percentage (Democratic States) .0931
 Per Capita Total Spending and Hispanic Population percentage (Republican States) -.1462
 Per Capita Total Spending and Hispanic Population percentage (Democratic States) -.0228

To summarize the above data, Republican states showed lower correlations between welfare spending and Hispanic, Black, and White populations. Additionally, the correlational value when looking at White population percentage and welfare spending was higher in Republican states than in Democrat states, indicating a higher level of willingness to support welfare among more homogenous populations. However, both states showed the highest correlational values among those measured when looking at White Population percentage.

Demographically, Sweden, on the other hand, during the period established as formational for the Swedish welfare state, has lacked the significant racial tensions and multiple large minority populations inherent in the United States' demographic arrangement. That Sweden is possessed of significant minority populations is very obvious-the lasting presence of the Sami has been noteworthy throughout Swedish history, and today they are granted a certain elevated measure of autonomy in governing their own semi-independent affairs. Additionally, a significant effort has been undertaken to ensure the attempted preservation of Sami culture. (Government of Sweden 2016e) However, compared to the United States, Sweden has a very low minority population. 89.3% of the population identifies themselves as specifically

“Swedish”, with only a small fraction identifying themselves as another ethnic group. (This compared to the United States, where minorities number in the low to mid 30% range.) Amongst this minority group, further illuminating the relative homogeneity of the Swedish population, native Sami people and Swedish Finns dominate. (Statistics Sweden 2016b)

In Anthony Smith’s arguments for the independence of “nations” and “states”, he goes so far as to include Sweden in a very short list of states where the cultural unity is comprehensive throughout the state’s territories, in the sense that the immigrant and minority native peoples of Sweden do not impair the cultural unity of the country as a whole. The United States is not on the short list.

He argues in addition that statewide institutions such as the Swedish social welfare system function only in environments of widespread cultural homogeneity across a state’s entirety-conditions, which he also argues do not exist in the United States. (Smith 1986 263)

Thomas Faist contends that America’s lasting racial divides have impeded any progress by the generally labeled “social democrats” in establishing anything resembling the more advanced social support structure seen in European states such as Sweden. (Faist 1995) These demographic characteristics obviously cannot be taken as the sole overriding reason for the lack of the development of a social welfare system similar to that of Sweden in the United States; however, that it is a significant factor appears definite.

Politically, a series of events and proceedings were found to have provided a significant impetus towards the foundation of the Swedish welfare state. As early as the turn of the first millennia A.D., Viking regional taxation and country-wide institution implementation served as obvious precursors for modern Swedish social institutions and policy arrangements. It is worth

noting that similar historical parallels do not exist in American culture, given its relative youth as a country and the suppression of Native American influence following the suppression of that native population. Further events, such as the growing of power of the Riksdag in the 1700s and 1800s, and the formation of the Social Democrat party during the industrialization and unionization spree that began in the late 1800s would also serve to drive the formation of the welfare state in a multitude of significant fashions.

The political stability that is a commonplace stereotype of Sweden in particular and Scandinavia as a whole was lent in large part to its modern reputation by the dominance of Swedish politics during the 20th century and onwards by the Social Democrats, for whom the modern Swedish social welfare state was a primary aspired goal; a goal which they were given the political and economic opportunity to see through until its completion by the aforementioned longevity of their dominant political interests in Sweden, which coincided in large part with the post-World War Two economic boom. This continuity and clear access to purpose is a blatantly obvious contributor to the establishment of a welfare state, and it is equally obvious that such a parallel does not exist in the history of the United States. American political alignment being much more polarized, it is noteworthy for a single party to remain in power beyond the term limit of a single executive, never mind the decades of uninterrupted power enjoyed by the Social Democrats. Judging by the Swedish model, the establishment of a welfare state is a lengthy, decades long process, and given the readily apparent significance of political continuity, and the lack thereof in the United States, it can be noted that this would form an impediment to the formation of a Swedish style welfare state.

In brief summary, then, events have been organized under the auspices of three main spheres of influence on the formation of the modern Swedish welfare state-events of economic,

political, and demographic natures. In comparing these events to American history in an attempt to find logical and suitable comparisons, some connections were made, while others were limited to a certain extent. American economic indicators were found to correlate strongly with Sweden-a post war boom is clearly seen, as are adverse effects from the Great Depression and a lack of infrastructure damage from World War Two. However, the other two key areas of influence in Swedish social welfare state formation are not found to correlate significantly with American historical record. American politics have for no reasonably comparable period of time been dominated by a single party, never mind one of the inclination to provide a social welfare net as broad as that implemented by the Social Democrats in Sweden over the course of 45+ odd years. Additionally, American disregard for Soviet-related practices such as socialism led to an inherent disregard for social welfare practices on the Swedish scale. (Alesina, Sacerdote, and Glaeser 2001 26) Demographically, as well, America is unsuitable for the replication of the conditions found in the formation of the modern Swedish welfare state. The significantly increased presence of and marginalization of minorities in America as opposed to Sweden has served to divide the population and prevent majority opinion swaying towards the redistribution of wealth to these marginalized “otherized” populations. Statistical analyses determining the nature of this disparity only serves to further illuminate the significance of these assertions.

Thesis Discussion

Any dialogue regarding the events concerning the rise of the modern day Swedish social welfare and their potential parallels in American history is incomplete without a comprehensive analysis of the similarities and differences between the economics, politics, and demographics of the two nations. In analyzing the differing aspects of these various spheres of two separate nations as different and alike as the United States and Sweden, significant correlations and the equally meaningful lacks thereof can be found; these qualitative conclusions and quantitative datum can then be utilized to great effect in discerning the foundational aspects of the modern day Swedish welfare system and its summary potential past-application to the United States of America. In the analysis of the events leading to the rise of the Swedish welfare system, and in summarily analyzing their potential counterparts in American economics, demographics, and politics, it is clear that a number of observations can be made as to the nature of this relationship, whether correlation exists between the varying spheres of connectivity or not.

No discussion of any social welfare system is complete without an underlying analysis of the economic nature of the study site at hand. Social welfare systems are at their heart vessels of the redistribution of wealth-mostly from richer, better-off individuals to those less well off, or skirting the fringe of poverty. It is a logical fact that redistribution only functions effectively when significant wealth is available for redistribution. What primarily, policy-wise, makes Scandinavian-style social welfare states, most specifically Sweden, different from a welfare state such as the modern American welfare state, is the scale and level of government involvement in regulating and ensuring public health; through a relatively high level of influence over direct care and public health insurance, public policymaking, and by way of benefits for workers, parents, and students.

Furthermore, the Swedish welfare state is different from the American welfare state, (And an oft-used comparison for the American welfare state) given the relatively more positive quality of life and economic equality indicators seen in Sweden versus the United States. US News ranks Sweden's quality of life as second in the world; Business Insider ranks them second as well in the same metric, and the United Nations ranks Sweden's human development index at 14th in the world. (US News 2016) (United Nations Development Programme 2014) (Willet 2013) At the same time, in all of these polls and almost every other poll and metric measuring economic equality, quality of life, development, etc., the United States falls significantly behind the Swedes. Many of the statistics used to calculate these figures, such as life expectancy and Gini coefficients are a direct result of the influence or lack thereof of the welfare state in both countries. From this, we can conclude at the very least the concept of a Swedish style welfare state is an idea to be considered hypothetically concerning the potential benefits it might have on American quality of life.

Regardless, it is obvious by a multitude of economic metrics-GDP PPP, GDP per capita, etc., that Sweden is one of the most prosperous nations in Europe and certainly in the world as a whole. This prosperity bloomed almost simultaneously alongside the constant implementation of social welfare policies during the period from the start of the 20th century to the 1970s. Is it essential to note the impact several formative historical events had on this correlation; the Great Depression, the industrial growth of the 1800s, and specifically World War Two. It is not a prerequisite to the establishment of a social welfare state, in particular a Scandinavian-style heavy benefits system, that the country sustain a lack of infrastructure damage during World War Two. Countries such as the United Kingdom, Norway, and Denmark have notable levels of social welfare policy implementation despite suffering from varying degrees of loss during

World War Two. Regardless, the Swedes relatively undamaged position emerging from the World War Two era into the post-war period gave them a leg up on their competitors in emerging into the post Breton Woods/GATT world of economic globalization. This leg up, as it were, alongside the unquestioned domestic popularity afforded the Social Democratic leadership as a result of the co-occurring countrywide economic prosperity, served to drive policy implementation. It is left inconclusively explained by this work as to whether the opposite is the case-that the policies enacted by the Social Democrats during the post-war period contributed in significant ways towards what can be clearly delineated by metrics as, even by the standards of post-World War economic booms, remarkable economic progress in Sweden.

Demographically, a variety of important conclusions can be drawn that illuminate some of the differences between America and Sweden, and, more specifically, their welfare policies. Statistical analyses both from this paper and other sources support the assertion that redistributive efforts in the United States are especially marginalized when higher non-majority-race populations are present. At the same time, left-leaning states in the United States are more likely to redistribute with the presence of higher minority populations as opposed to right-leaning states. (Left-leaning states being more similar to the more mainstream Swedish political parties) It is important to note that in the United States, both conservative and liberal parties both show higher correlation between welfare spending and majority white populations than they do on welfare spending and minority black and Hispanic populations. These two conclusions alone support the idea that the relatively homogenous Sweden is more racially inclined towards redistribution than the more heterogeneous United States.

At the same time, Swedish minorities trend much more towards the Caucasian majority than in the United States-the major minority populations in Sweden are light-skinned peoples

native to the area, whereas in the United States darker skinned populations of African Americans and Hispanics often live in areas geographically distant compared to Swedish minorities. This indicates that the perceived racial gap between the majority American racial group and the majority Swedish racial group is even larger than a simple delineation by skin color; that the racial gap is compounded not just by appearance and racial bias but by cultural and historical differences which are manifest much more strongly in the United States. Summarily, it can be assumed that racial bias in the United States significantly hampers redistributive efforts on a scale not seen in Sweden.

In a similar pattern to that seen in the United States, the cessation of social welfare policies correlated positively with the increased influx of immigrants to Sweden. Given the aforementioned observation of the Harvard Institute of Economic Research, that American welfare has been limited by social opposition to redistribution to the poor and to minority populations, one must consider the concept of whether or not the influx of immigrants contributed to this tailing off of welfare policy. However, given that the immigrant surge has only just begun in Sweden, relative to the centuries of significant immigration in the history of the United States, it is too early to accurately gauge its effectiveness at changing Swedish social welfare policy. At the same time, the oil crises of the 1970s and the general economic downturn of this period as the post-war boom tailed off in Sweden, amongst, among other things, increased market competition from countries like Japan, may have contributed to this tailing off of policymaking. Not only does this engender the follow-up question of what event(s) specifically caused the tapering implementation of widespread new policy implementation in Sweden, but also whether these events correlate to similar events in the United States, as the formational events leading to the enactment of the policies did in a portion of the analyzed areas.

At the same time, the origin of immigrants is an important complication in the discussion of the effect demographics and ethnic minorities have on policy implementation. A large amount of Swedish immigrants are refugees from war zones, while the vast majority of American immigrants, historically, have been through the slave trade or, more recently, immigrants searching for a brighter future in a perceived land of opportunity, often from at the time beset European, Asian, or Central and South American locales. This variation is undoubtedly a contributor to the different treatment received by immigrant populations in the respective countries. (Smith 1986) It is thus possible, and worth examining further in a future study, whether it is that the purpose of immigration is as important as the immigration of the individual on its own in determining overall social reactions to immigration and the subsequent reactions as seen through the lens of policymaking affected by said immigration.

Politically, the fact that the Social Democrats championed the formative nature of the Swedish welfare state and shepherded it into its modern iteration, and continue to do so today, is unquestionably a defining reason that the social welfare system has arrived at its particular state of refinement in Sweden. The duration of their control of Swedish politics is remarkable in a fair democratic society-it is rare that a single party holds power for more than a decade, never mind more than four decades, during some of the most turbulent times of the 20th century. This singular unity of Swedish politics, along with uncharacteristic, at least from an American perspective, community-centered logic and empathy in policymaking seems deserving of special mention. Regardless, the simplistic nature of their electoral dominance over Swedish politics and their avowed devotion to redistributive and competitive social welfare programs endeavors to create a mockery of in-depth analysis, as none is needed to see the role they played in the formation of Swedish social welfare policy. That similar continuity would have a similar effect

on American politics is a logical assumption, however, the nature of the political party in question would no doubt engender a measure of doubt as to the potential affectation of a more comprehensive and redistributive welfare environment. For example, a modern day Republican period of control lasting several decades would at this point be unlikely to result in increased social welfare, especially given the statistical findings on redistributive hindrances in populations that elect right leaning representatives.

Thesis Conclusion

Implications

Research into the rise of the modern social welfare state system in Sweden has yielded interesting datum concerning how the system came into being, and the identification of these factors behind the foundation of the welfare system offer markers by which we can identify similar situations in different countries. At the same time, if one intended to project the future nature of a state's welfare system, these variables could themselves be anticipated to see if such a system's formation could indeed perhaps be on the horizon.

Analysis of the history of Sweden indicated a variety of factors significant to the formation of the modern Swedish welfare state. Economics, politics, and demographics were identified as the key areas contributing to formation of the Swedish welfare state. Furthermore, specific facets of these three spheres of study concerning the rise of social welfare were recognized as especially formative aspects in their respective areas in regard to the impetus behind the implementation of the social policies underlying the welfare system.

Economically, industrialization, World War Two, and the post-World War Two economic boom were identified as key contributors towards the economic characteristics later deemed necessary to formulate the modern day social welfare policies. Industrialization centered on the end of the 19th century and the start of the 20th century set the stage for the economic conditions necessary for the post-World War Two economic boom. World War Two itself, while globally devastating, was less so for Sweden-despite economic interruptions and rationing during wartime, along with the shrinkage of the Swedish export market during the war, Sweden emerged into the post-war period with its infrastructure relatively intact, and in some

industries new levels of productivity had been reached due to wartime demand for materials, such as steel. (Magnusson 2000) The post-war boom in Sweden was driven by the increasing globalization of world trade and the aforementioned head start enjoyed by Swedish industries, given the lack of destruction visited upon the country during the conflict. Additional treaties such as the GATT and the Breton Woods agreement also served to strengthen the post-war economy. (Schön 2012)

Demographically, the relative homogeneity of the Swedish population until the bulk of policy implementation passed in the mid-1970s was determined to be a significant factor in the social support for the implementation of welfare policy-individuals were deemed more likely to approve of redistributive government policy in the presence of a relatively homogenous population. (Alesina, Glaeser, and Sacerdote 2001) At the same time, comparative analysis of Swedish and American demographics showed a decreased impetus for redistribution based on higher minority populations in America as a whole. It can be safely concluded from this data and other studies performed on the effects of racial bias on redistribution in America that the role of racial bias is a significant one in the hindrance of redistributive efforts such as those in the Swedish style.

Politically, the single greatest direct policy driver of Swedish welfare system implementation during the 20th century was the Social Democrat party-founded in 1889 in close concert with the unions also forming at the time, they would come into power in 1932 and remain in leadership of the Riksdag and the Swedish government for more than forty years until the economic unrest of the mid-1970s would unsettle the Swedish political machine. The welfare state was the prime project of the Social Democrats, and they used their lengthy political influence, the prosperity of the economy under their keeping, and the social support for the

welfare state to implement and refine welfare in Sweden for more than 40 years, eventually culminating in today's modern Swedish welfare state.

Upon the individual analysis of each of these differing fields of study, geographic analysis was essential to the tying together of varying loose ideas from each of these content areas. The differing geographic scale of Sweden and the United States formed a major boundary for cross-comparison between American and Swedish data sets, necessitating a combinative analysis that was by necessity, geographic in nature. Only through such a broad lens could the specific effects of homogeneity, economics, demographics, and political influence be measure and compared effectively.

The Rise of the Welfare State in Sweden; a Correlating American Window?

Aspects of American society today, viewed from a certain angle, invite the attractiveness of the Swedish social welfare state. An efficient, logical government, lower inequality, higher benefits, free health insurance, cheap higher education, and a high standard of living and health care all would be considerable draws towards the common middle and lower-class American citizen. Therefore, the second phase of the research beyond the identification of the formative aspects of Swedish social welfare asked if the same factors identified as significant contributors to the rise of the modern Swedish social welfare state could be identified as similarly co-occurring in American history; in essence, was there a window in which an American social welfare system could have been a reality? In short, this question has proven to be a dead end. Indeed; the post-World War II economic framework favored America tremendously and during this time the United States prospered economically, much as Sweden had in the same time period. The economic framework for the establishment of a social welfare state was present.

Indeed, as the world's leading economy, one could argue that the economic window is still open for America up to the modern day. Regardless, the other two spheres of influence on the rise of the Swedish welfare state were rather remarkably different compared to their American counterparts. While Sweden experienced relative demographic homogeneity during the period of social welfare policy implementation, America has never really been demographically homogenous since its foundation, and to exacerbate that discrepancy, while Sweden has a relatively benign opinion of minority populations, America is not notable for such tolerance. Oppression of minorities has been an American staple for hundreds of years, and even to this day, for example, figures as elevated as presidential nominees continue to "otherize" minorities to great popular appeal. This lack of demographic and cultural homogeneity has been shown time and again by researchers from a myriad of fields to attribute directly to the impedance of the implementation of any large-scale Swedish-style welfare system, particularly in America.

Additionally, American politics have a history of significantly more variance than achieved by Swedish politics during the aforementioned policy implementation period in Sweden. It can be safely assumed that a vast majority of Americans have never strongly considered the notion that a single political party might dominate the government for more than a handful of executive terms, never mind the four-plus decades of control enjoyed by the Social Democrats. This lengthy time period is necessary to build the support and policy framework necessary to build and refine a system as comprehensive and inclusive as the modern Swedish welfare state, and the framework and the opportunity for this framework is lacking in America.

Further Research

The broad nature of the research into the formative variables of an entire welfare state brought into being over the course of decades concerns a number of factors and influencing variables that beggars the imagination. Further examination of the intricacies of the interactions between varying spheres of influence, both aforementioned (economic, political and demographic) and not, would surely only serve to highlight more questions regarding the role of various factors in the impetus to bring about the formation of the welfare policies. Did the proximity of communist Russia have an influence on the relatively redistributive Swedish system? Did the relative lack of a classical Middle Ages feudal system in Sweden make a difference in the rapid adoption of a Scandinavian-style social welfare state? To what degree did ostensible Scandinavian unity have on the formation of not just the Swedish welfare state, but the Finnish, Norwegian, Danish, and Icelandic states as well? In regards to the comparison of Swedish welfare-formative factors with their proposed potential American counterparts, what role does the classification of immigrants play in the adoption of redistributive policies? Are Swedish refugees from dangerous combat zones viewed differently than American immigrants from around the world? Did the American legacy of slavery affect redistributive policy towards a poor population composed disproportionately of members of this formerly oppressed population? As with the research question itself, further inquiries can only be defined by the limits placed upon them, not the limits created by their analysis.

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Appendix

Swedish Timeline

- 1860- Sweden Begins Trek Toward Modern Industrialization
- 1889- Social Democrat Party Founded
- 1909- Male Suffrage Established
- 1912- Industrial Safety Laws
- 1913- Old-age Pension Insurance
- 1917- Communists Split from Social Democrat Party
- 1918- Universal Suffrage
- 1919- Eight Hour Workday
- 1928- Collective Bargaining Legislation
- 1932- Social Democrats, led by Per Albin Hansson, Establish a Minority Government
- 1937- Maternity Benefits and Maintenance Allowances
- 1939- World War Two Begins
- 1944- Breton Woods Agreement Signed
- 1945- World War Two Ends
- 1948- GATT Comes Into Effectiveness
- 1948- Two Weeks Minimum Holiday Leave
- 1949- General Child Allowances
- 1950- General Period of High Economic Prosperity Begins
- 1953- Three Weeks Minimum Holiday Leave
- 1955- National Health Insurance
- 1960- Forty-five Hour Work Week, Wage-related Pensions
- 1968- First Major Spike in Immigration in Sweden
- 1969- Housing Subsidies for Families with Children
- 1974- Job Security Legislation

1976- A Coalition Wrests Government Control from the Social Democrats

1976- Reduced Pension Age